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The Truth Speaks

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SIDDU OUT, DKS IN

Among the biggest OBC leaders of Cong, Siddaramaiah resigned as CM after months of tug-of-war with his bete noire, DK Shivakumar, over the top job

BENGALURU

The curtain finally fell Thursday afternoon! Siddaramaiah, Karnataka's longest-serving Chief Minister, resigned, ending days of suspense after the Congress high command told him to step down and pave the way for his bete noire DK Shivakumar.

Shivakumar, whose tug-of-war with Siddaramaiah over the top post has played out over the past few months, is all set to take over as the new CM with two to three deputies to ensure the caste equation remains balanced.

Thus was the Congress' Karnataka leadership squabble - a Siddaramaiah vs Shivakumar showdown that has plagued the party over the past three years, bringing its government to the edge of disaster more than once and leaving it open to rival BJP's jibes - resolved, at least for now.

AICC general secretary in charge of Karnataka, Randeep Singh Surjewala, and party general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal are in Bengaluru to oversee the transition.

OBC leader with mass appeal

Among the biggest OBC leaders of the Congress with a mass appeal, Siddaramaiah's departure brings down the curtains on one of the most enduring political careers in the party's Karnataka history.

Earlier in the day, Siddaramaiah broke the news of his resignation to his Cabinet over a closely watched breakfast meeting. Shivakumar, who was present, was seen embracing Siddaramaiah and even touching his feet to seek his blessings. The optics were enough to confirm that a leadership transition in the state was to take place.

Before the media briefing, Siddaramaiah submitted his resignation to the secretary of Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, who is out of the state. The Governor is likely to return by the end of the day.

Siddu says no to RS offer

However, the firebrand leader, in a parting shot, said he would be actively involved in state politics and declined the Congress high command's offer of a Rajya Sabha seat.

Addressing the media after his resignation, Siddaramaiah said he was making way for a new CM, but had no interest in a national role. "When the high command asks me to resign, I will resign. Two days back, the high command asked me to step down. Hence, I have resigned," Siddaramaiah, among the tallest Congress OBC leaders, said. "The high command asked me to go to the Rajya Sabha, but I said no to it. I have no interest in national politics. I will continue in active politics in Karnataka."

Siddaramaiah dismissed speculation of any bad blood. "Always believed that we should stay as one family... Ensured equality during my tenure," he said, hinting at confrontation between him and Shivakumar.

After eight years and eight days as the CM of the southern state, spread across two non-continuous terms, Congress veteran and 'leader of the masses' Siddaramaiah is most likely to move to the Rajya Sabha with a view of a larger national role ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha election, as per sources.

'Didn't chase money'

The outgoing chief minister said he didn't chase money during his political life. "I neither chased money nor craved to build properties; my political life is an open book," he said.

'Fulfilled all promises'

Siddaramaiah said he fulfilled all promises made to the people as the chief minister of Karnataka. "We have made a sincere effort to fulfil the promises made to the people of the state. We have not broken our word. This is something that has given me and our party satisfaction. They (opposition) have spread misinformation about me. They have spread misinformation against me, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They said that there will be no money for development work, and the treasury will be empty. After the guarantee was implemented, we are number 1 in the entire country in terms of income. We are second in GST collection. Maharashtra is number 1, Karnataka is number 2," he added.

'Never dreamt of becoming CM'

Siddaramaiah, reflecting on his political journey, said he had never imagined becoming an MLA, minister or chief minister after joining the Congress in 2006. "It was by mistake I entered politics. Nobody in my family was in active politics-neither my parents nor anyone else. I had never dreamt I would become an MLA, a minister, a chief minister ever," he said.

Thankful for "opportunity"

"I would like to express my immense gratitude to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, who have provided this opportunity," Siddaramaiah said.

SIDDARAMAIAH, SHIVAKUMAR LEAVE FOR DELHI

Bengaluru: Shortly after tendering his resignation as the CM, Siddaramaiah left for New Delhi, where he is likely to meet the high command regarding his successor and the Cabinet formation exercise. As per sources, discussions related to selecting new legislature party leader, ministry composition, and other modalities, including the KPCC president post, which is currently held by Shivakumar, are likely to be discussed. Shivakumar, who is widely seen as the frontrunner to succeed Siddaramaiah as CM, left for New Delhi hours after Siddaramaiah announced his resignation.

Siddu's flight lands in Jaipur amid bad weather in Delhi

The special flight carrying outgoing CM Siddaramaiah, his son Yathindra and party national general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala, took a detour to Jaipur amid bad weather in Delhi on Thursday. Following his resignation as the CM, Siddaramaiah left for the national capital, where he is likely to hold talks with the High Command regarding his successor.

Karnataka Congress CLP meet likely tomorrow

Bengaluru: The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) is likely to be convened on Saturday, followed by the swearing-in of the new chief minister and cabinet the same day.However, there is also a possibility of the ceremony being held on Sunday as it depends on CM-designate D K Shivakumar finding an auspicious time from his personal astrologer, sources said.Apart from AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge, LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra are expected to be invited for the swearing-in ceremony.If the high command gives its nod for a full-fledged cabinet, the swearing-in is likely to be held on the grand steps of Vidhana Soudha — a legacy associated with former chief ministers late Ramakrishna Hegde and later SM Krishna, which Shivakumar reportedly wishes to follow. However, with the June 18 Rajya Sabha polls approaching, the high command may opt for a partial cabinet while keeping some berths vacant. Analysts believe a full-fledged cabinet could trigger dissidence among disgruntled MLAs denied ministerial positions, which opposition parties may attempt to exploit during the Rajya Sabha elections through cross-voting.

Early years and entry into politics

Siddaramaiah's political journey spans over four decades. It began in the early 1980s and took him from a humble background in a village in Mysuru district to becoming one of Karnataka's most prominent mass leaders, a two-time Chief Minister, and an iconic figure within the Janata Parivar (JP) and the Indian National Congress (INC).

Key milestones in his career

- **1980:** Siddaramaiah's first foray into electoral politics was an unsuccessful attempt at the Lok Sabha poll from Mysuru.
- **1983:** He made his legislative breakthrough by winning the Chamundeshwari assembly seat as an independent candidate, which soon led to his association with the Janata Party.
- **1994 & 2004:** He established a strong track record, serving twice as the Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka (with Finance and Excise portfolios) under Janata Dal (Secular) governments.

The Congress transition

- **2006:** After being expelled from the Janata Dal (Secular) following internal disputes, Siddaramaiah joined the Indian National Congress (INC).
- **2008:** He contested on a Congress ticket from the newly-formed Varuna seat and was appointed the LoP.

Chief Ministership (2013–2018)

- **2013:** After leading the Congress party to a massive electoral victory, Siddaramaiah was sworn in as CM.
- **FULL-TERM ADMINISTRATION:** He became the first Chief Minister of Karnataka in 40 years to complete a full, uninterrupted five-year term.Key Policies: His tenure was heavily focused on social welfare, highlighted by the flagship Anna Bhagya (free rice to the poor), Ksheera Bhagya, and Vidyasiri schemes.

Opposition to CM again (2018–2026)

- **2018 ELECTIONS:** He contested from Chamundeshwari and Badami, losing the former but winning Badami. He transitioned to serve as the Leader of the Opposition and the head of the Congress-JD(S) Coalition Coordination Committee.
- **2023 ELECTIONS:** Siddaramaiah returned as Chief Minister following a resounding victory for the Congress party in the assembly elections, focusing on a new series of welfare and guarantee programs.
- **MAY 28, 2026:** He announced his resignation from the office of CM under orders from the Cong High Command, marking a major transition in the state's leadership.

Guv back in Bengaluru

Bengaluru: Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot is back and Bengaluru. The governor was on a visit to Indore when outgoing Chief Minister Siddaramaiah tendered his resignation at the Lok Bhavan on Thursday afternoon.

Protests erupt across state after CM's resignation

Bengaluru: Supporters of Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Thursday staged protests in several parts of Karnataka against his decision to step down as CM. Emotional scenes were witnessed outside his official residence, Kaveri, in Bengaluru, where a large number of supporters gathered and surrounded him, urging him not to step down. Siddaramaiah was seen trying to console them. "Siddaramaiah is a committed politician who has worked tirelessly for the development of backward classes, Dalits and minorities. He implemented several welfare schemes for backward communities," one of the protesters said.

Siddu's policy man exits CMO

Bengaluru: KAS officer Venkateshaiah, a long-time collaborator with outgoing CM Siddaramaiah, was transferred on Thursday ahead of a new government stepping in. A 2012-batch KAS officer, Venkateshaiah was Siddaramaiah's private secretary. He has now been posted as director of agricultural marketing. Armed with a PhD, he was known as CM's trusted lieutenant on policy matters.

Par panel summons Edu Ministry over conduct of exams

New Delhi: A parliamentary panel has summoned officials of the Union Education Ministry, the National Testing Agency (NTA) and the CBI to appear before it on Friday in connection with the assurances pertaining to the conduct of examinations by the NTA.

According to a notice issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat on May 27, the Committee on Government Assurances will hear the views of Vineet Joshi, Secretary of the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, along with Abhishek Singh, Director General of NTA and Praveen Sood, Director of CBI. The committee meeting is scheduled for 11 am.

The matter pertains to an assurance given in Rajya Sabha in reply to an unstarred question (USQ) dated November 27, 2024, regarding "Conduct of Examination by NTA", the notice said.

UNLOCKING FUNDS FOR FRESH PROJECTS

NHAI lines up 17 NH assets for monetisation in FY27

NEW DELHI

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has finalised a tentative list of 17 National Highway projects proposed for monetisation under the Toll-Operate-Transfer (TOT) and Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) models during the financial year 2026-27.

The identified operational highway assets have a combined length of 1,692.5 km and are spread across nine states including Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Maharashtra.

The move is part of the Government of India's asset monetisation strategy aimed at unlocking value from operational National Highway stretches to mobilise funds for future infrastructure development and expansion.

Unlocking value from operational highways

- **Coverage:** 1,692 km of highways across 9 states
- **Assets are spread in 9 states:** Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Maharashtra

Identified stretches include:

- Ballari–Byrapura–Hiriyur section of NH 150A - 147.4 km (Karnataka)
- Hubballi–Hospet section of NH-63 - 143.2 km (Karnataka)
- Yadgir–Warangal section of NH-163 - 99.1 km (Karnataka/Telangana)

Why NHAI is monetising highway stretches

According to NHAI, the initiative is intended to promote private sector participation and accelerate the expansion and modernisation of the National Highway network.

The authority said the monetisation plan will also help investors and bidders plan investments more efficiently.

The identified highway stretches include key economic and logistics corridors with established traffic potential and strong connectivity significance.

NHAI further said the monetisation exercise will be undertaken through transparent and structured mechanisms under the TOT and InvIT frameworks, which have emerged as successful models for attracting long-term institutional investments into highway infrastructure projects.

Among the identified stretches are: Huballi-Hospete section of NH, Ballari-Byrapura-Hiriyur and Yadgir-Warangal.

This fresh round of asset monetisation is part of NHAI's ongoing strategy to unlock value from operational highways and generate funds for new infrastructure development.

Air India extends flight curbs on Israel flights till July-end

Mumbai: Air India on Thursday announced a further extension of its suspension of flights between Delhi and Tel Aviv until July 31, citing continued geopolitical uncertainty in West Asia.

The airline had earlier suspended services on the route until the end of June, but ongoing security concerns in the region have prompted the carrier to prolong the halt by another month.

A senior executive overseeing Air India's Israel operations confirmed that the revised schedule was communicated on Wednesday evening.

"Flights have been further suspended till July 31 due to the prevailing geopolitical situation," the executive said.

Organic Mango-Jackfruit mela in Mysuru from May 29 to 31

OVER 80 MANGO VARIETIES, 35 TYPES OF JACKFRUIT TO ENTHRALL VISITORS

MYSURU

A vibrant celebration of organic farming, natural living and rural traditions will come alive in Mysuru as the three-day "Organic Mango and Jackfruit Fair" gets underway from May 29 to 31 at Nexus Centre City Mall in Mysuru.

The fair is being organised jointly by the Horticulture Department under the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) scheme with the objective of providing better market opportunities for farmers practicing traditional and organic agriculture, said Joint Director of Horticulture Manjunath Angadi.

Addressing a news conference here on Wednesday, he noted that last year's three-day Organic Mango and Jackfruit Fair held at Lalbagh Botanical Garden had received an overwhelming response, prompting organisers to bring the colourful celebration to Mysuru this year with added attractions and activities. Apart from a wide range of organic mangoes and jackfruits, the fair will feature stalls displaying and selling organic food products, value-added farm produce, traditional snacks and eco-friendly goods. Farmers will get a direct platform to market naturally grown fruits to consumers.

Special live demonstrations on preparing mango- and jackfruit-based dishes will also be organised, allowing visitors to taste and purchase the delicacies. Families of farmers from different parts of the state will introduce regional cuisines and traditional food cultures during the event. Another major attraction will be displays of garments and handicrafts made using natural and organic dyes. Organisers will also demonstrate the production, collection and processing methods involved in creating these eco-friendly products.

Workshops on urban gardening, natural soap-making and eco-friendly detergents will be conducted for the public. Experts will demonstrate how native plant varieties can be grown in household spaces and how natural raw materials can be used to prepare daily-use cleaning products.

President of the Biological Society Dr. Ramakrishna said the exhibition will showcase more than 80 local and international mango varieties and over 35 varieties of jackfruit.

"The event is designed to educate the younger generation about the diversity of mangoes and jackfruits found across Karnataka, methods of identifying varieties, and the efforts of farmers who are conserving these precious plant species," he said.

Visitors will also learn about the unique qualities of different varieties, including the famous Tipu Badami mangoes and the diverse jackfruit varieties of Alur, along with information on the climatic conditions best suited for their cultivation and the process of naturally ripening fruits.

The organisers said the fair would offer visitors a sensory experience by highlighting the differences in aroma, colour and taste among various naturally grown fruits.

Raitha Santhe member Kavitha Srinivasan said children would be encouraged to participate in drawing activities based on themes such as natural farming, environmental conservation and livestock rearing.

To promote traditional rural lifestyles, live demonstrations of clay pot-making — considered an integral part of village culture — will also be organised during the fair.

As part of the cultural programmes for children, the play "Pippigondu Pappi," written and directed by noted theatre personality Prasanna Heggodu, will be staged by Bharatiya Shikshana Samsthe, Mysuru, on May 30 from 7 pm to 8 pm.

Members of the Biological Society, including Sahani and Darshan A.M., were present during the announcement of the event.

From Village Grounds to Global Glory

Chaitra, Sushmitha Inspire Mysuru Youth

MYSURU

Stories of grit, determination and sporting excellence took centre stage at the Rotary Midtown–Wekreate Space Sports Award 2026 ceremony held here on Wednesday, where international athletes B. Chaitra and Sushmitha Pawar inspired youngsters with their journeys from humble beginnings to national and international recognition.

Addressing the gathering after receiving the award, B. Chaitra, a member of India's victorious 2025 Kho Kho World Cup team, said she had answered critics through her achievements on the field.

Coming from Kuruburu village in Nanjangud taluk, Chaitra recalled how she began playing kho kho while studying in Class 4 and faced discouragement from many people in her early days.

"Several people believed girls could not make a mark in sports. But with the constant support of my family and the guidance of my coach Manjunath, I continued to work hard and reached the international level," she said.

Chaitra observed that even today many girls in rural areas struggle against social barriers to pursue sports. "Despite the challenges, women athletes are proving themselves in every field. Sports not only brought me recognition after the World Cup victory but also transformed my life completely," she added.

She also urged students to balance academics with sports, stating that games help in building confidence, discipline, physical fitness and mental strength.

Assistant Director in the Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Welfare, Sushmitha Pawar, who also addressed the event, shared her own inspiring journey in sports. A former international kabaddi player and 2014 Asian Games gold medallist, Sushmitha said her sporting career opened doors to employment opportunities and personal growth. "Sports helped me secure a position in the Police Department in 2006, and last year I was promoted to Group B service. Today, there are immense opportunities for talented sportspersons, and youngsters should make the best use of them," she said.

Rotary Midtown President K.L. Rakesh Babu, Secretary Bhaskar Sainik, A.N. Aiyanna and several others were present.

183 Students of MMK & SDM Women's College secure good jobs

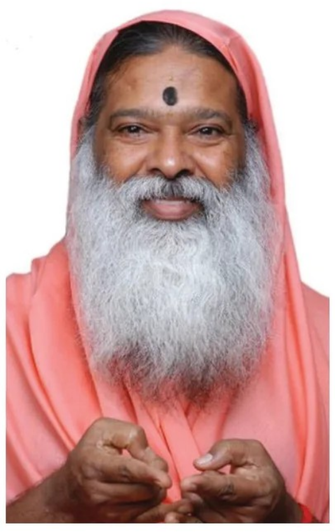
MYSURU

A total of 183 final-year students of B.Com, B.Sc, BCA and BBA courses from MMK and Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara Women's College of Mysuru have secured employment opportunities in various reputed companies during the academic year 2025–26 through the efforts of the IQAC and Career Guidance and Placement Committee of the college.

According to the college administration, 17 students have been placed at Tata Consultancy Services with an annual salary package of Rs.1.75 lakh. As many as 93 students secured jobs at Veda Skilling Private Limited with an annual package of Rs.7 lakh. Fourteen students were recruited by Equal ICE RCM with an annual salary of Rs.3 lakh, while 27 students obtained placements at Koryo Edutech Private Limited with annual packages of Rs.7 lakh. Another 32 students secured jobs at Learn Flu with annual packages of Rs.8 lakh.

College Principal Prof. Bharathi N stated that the institution gives top priority to fulfilling the career aspirations of students and their parents by offering systematic training programmes throughout the degree course. The first-year students are provided with a three-day skill-based training programme, second-year students undergo personality development training, and final-year students receive a week-long CRT training programme conducted by reputed organisations.

Arivu foundation to honour Sri Ganapati seer on Sunday



MYSURU

Marking the 84th birthday celebrations of Avadhoota Datta Peetham seer Sri Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swamiji, the Arivu Foundation has organised a special Guru Vandana programme on May 31 at 10.30 am at the Nagamantapa of the Ganapathy Sachchidananda Ashram on Nanjangud Road in Mysuru.

Appealing to devotees to participate in large numbers, Arivu Foundation president Srikanth Kashyap said several dignitaries and social leaders will attend the event as chief guests.

Among those expected to participate are RSS city pracharak Naveen, social worker Raghuram Vajpayee, Chamber of Commerce and Industry president K.B. Lingaraju, Varsha of Credit-I Institution, Hoysala Karnataka Sangha president K.R. Satyanarayan, Jeevadhara Blood Bank director Girish, former city corporation member Ramprasad, KMPK Charitable Trust president Vikram Iyengar, social worker Doora Rajanna and others.

Souramana Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Jayanti and special 'Swati' puja tomorrow

MYSORE

On Saturday, May 30, at the Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy Temple of the historic Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Math, Mysore Branch, with the divine grace of Sri Sri Yadugiri Yathiraja Ramanuja Jiyar, a solar-powered Sri Lakshminarasimha Jayanti and special 'Swati' Puja will be organized.

n that day, at 7.30 am, Vishwaroop Darshan, at 8.45 am, Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy Navakalasha Sthapaana Thirumanjana (abhisheka) and Divya Prabandha Pharayana will be organized, at 1 pm, special decoration, mantra flower, Ashtottar, at 1.30 pm, Maha Naivedya, Mangalarati and Tirtha Prasadam Viniyoga will be organized. The temple head Vidwan K.R. Yoganarasimhan (Muruli Iyengar) said that there will be a Thiruvidhi Utsav at 7.00 pm (on the main roads), Mahamangalarati at 3 pm, Tirtha Prasad Viniyoga, and a private service to the deity at 9 pm. For information, contact mobile 9342188323, 7598832271.

Menstrual Hygiene Day observed at SMT Hospital

MYSURU

Menstrual Hygiene Day was observed at SMT Hospital in Mysuru on Thursday. Medical officers and staff members of SMT Hospital, along with the staff of the Taluk Health Officer's office, participated in the programme.

District Health Education Officer Munindramma also took part in the event and provided health education to mothers on the importance of menstrual hygiene and healthy practices during menstruation.

"Environmentalists are not anti-development"

Citizens Appeal to Chief Justice of India

MYSURU

Members of Parisarakkaagi Naavu (People For Environment) have submitted an appeal to the Chief Justice of India urging the Supreme Court to reconsider recent oral observations made during the hearing of the Pipavav Port expansion case, where environmentalists were reportedly portrayed as obstructing development.

In the appeal, the environmental group stated that such remarks were unfair to citizens and organizations who raise ecological concerns in the larger public interest and in fulfillment of their constitutional duty.

The activists emphasized that environmentalists are not opposed to development, but only to projects that allegedly violate environmental safeguards, damage forests, lakes and biodiversity, or threaten public health and ecological balance.

Citing Article 51A(g) of the Constitution, the group said protection of the environment is a fundamental duty of every citizen and that those questioning environmentally harmful projects are discharging a constitutional responsibility rather than acting against national progress.

The appeal referred to several projects in Karnataka where environmental groups had raised concerns, including the proposed Chamundi Hills Ropeway project, KRS theme park, Chamalapura thermal power plant, Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project, Bengaluru Cantonment railway land diversion and the proposed land diversion at the KSIC Silk Filature Factory in T. Narasipura.

According to the organization, these objections were based on concerns relating to deforestation, ecological degradation, biodiversity loss, pollution and destruction of green cover. In several instances, courts had intervened and granted interim relief, indicating that the concerns deserved serious scrutiny.

The appeal further stated that India is already facing severe environmental challenges such as urban flooding, groundwater depletion, rising temperatures, air pollution and destruction of wetlands due to poorly planned development.

"Environmentalists often serve as an early warning system for society. Sustainable development alone can ensure a safe future for coming generations," the appeal stated.

The signatories urged the Supreme Court not to broadly characterize environmentalists as anti-development forces and requested the judiciary to recognize the role played by citizens acting in good faith for environmental protection.

The appeal was signed by A.T. Ramaswamy, Kavitha A.S. Eledahally, Anjaneya Reddy Niravari, Parashuramegowda, Parvathi Sriram, Sikandar C.H., Mahesh Basapur and R.N. Venugopal.

Kadamba Kannada K'taka Sena celebrates Kannada Empire

MYSURU

Members of Kadamba Kannada Karnataka Sena today paid floral tributes to the statue of Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar at K.R. Circle in Mysuru and celebrated the 1681st Kannada Empire Festival commemorating the legacy of Kadamba ruler Mayuravarma, who is regarded as the founder of the first Kannada kingdom, the Kadamba Empire.

The programme was led by Kadamba Kannada Sena State President Shivakumar, Founder President Kadamba N. Ambarish and newly-appointed Mysuru City District President Advocate Shivaraj. Floral tributes were also offered to the portrait of Kadamba King Mayuravarma as part of the celebrations. Sweets were distributed to the public on the occasion.

Film actor Jayaprakash attended the event as the chief guest. Others present included Kannada activist Mooguru Nanjundaswamy, former Syndicate member Suresh Gowda, Kadamba Sena state leaders Bhagavan Mandya, Indavalu Somashekhar, Chikka Venkatappa, S. Venkatesh, Nanjangud President Basavanna, Suresh Gold Mysuru, Vijayakumar, and KJP State President Praveen Bharadwaj, who also paid floral tributes to the portrait of Mayuravarma.

Mysuru glows in spirit of Bakrid as faith, festivity and brotherhood fill the air

MYSURU

The City of Palaces came alive in festive colours and spiritual fervour as thousands of Muslims across Mysuru celebrated Bakrid, also known as Eid-e-Adha, on Thursday with devotion, joy and a strong message of communal harmony.

From the early hours of the morning, mosques and Eidgah grounds across the city witnessed a sea of worshippers dressed in traditional attire offering special Eid prayers. The atmosphere around Rajiv Nagar, Udayagiri, Mandi Mohalla, Bannimantap and other Muslim-majority localities was vibrant with greetings of "Eid Mubarak" echoing through the streets.

Religious leaders, during their sermons, highlighted the values of sacrifice, compassion, charity and humanity associated with Bakrid, commemorating the unwavering faith of Prophet Ibrahim. Special prayers were offered for peace, prosperity and communal harmony in Karnataka and across the country.

Families gathered to celebrate the festival with elaborate feasts featuring traditional delicacies, while children added colour to the celebrations in new outfits and festive enthusiasm. Markets in areas such as Mandi Mohalla and Lashkar Mohalla witnessed brisk business as people thronged shops for sweets, dry fruits, perfumes and festive essentials.

Political leaders, elected representatives and officials visited several mosques and Eidgahs to extend greetings to the Muslim community. Volunteers and social organisations also organised drinking water, medical aid and traffic management near major prayer venues.

The celebrations passed off peacefully under tight police security, with Mysuru once again showcasing its timeless culture of unity in diversity and harmonious coexistence.

Savarkar fought against the British on their own soil: MP Yaduveer

MYSURU

The 143rd birth anniversary of freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was organised by Savarkar Pratishthana Mysuru at Field Marshal Cariappa Circle in Mysuru on Thursday.

Mysuru-Kodagu Member of Parliament Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar paid floral tributes to Savarkar's portrait and said that Vinayak Damodar Savarkar had sacrificed a major part of his life in prison for the country's freedom struggle. The hardships and punishment Savarkar endured even after Independence were unimaginable.

Describing Savarkar as a brave patriot, Yaduveer said he had gone to Britain itself and organised resistance against the British rule. He also recalled the harsh imprisonment Savarkar underwent in a small cell at the Cellular Jail in the Andaman Islands and said it was the duty of everyone to remember and honour the sacrifices of such a great personality on his birth anniversary.

Sweets were later distributed to the public.

Among those present at the programme were Savarkar Pratishthana General Secretary Rakesh Bhat, former city corporation members Prashanth Gowda, Jagadish, Vikram Iyengar, Sandesh, Pramod Gowda, Sanjay, Santosh, T.S. Arun, Deepak, Ravi, Guide Chandru, Sanjay Prasanna, D. Raghavendra, Chetan, Bhagyaraj, Madhu Somashekar, Chandan Gowda, Murali, Nagendra, Vishnuvardhan and others.

Dr. Bangar takes charge as Principal Commissioner at GST Mysuru Commissionerate

MYSURU

Dr. Ravindra Ramchandra Bangar, an IRS officer of the 1996 batch (Customs & Indirect Taxes), officially assumed charge as the Principal Commissioner of the GST Mysuru Commissionerate.

Prior to this appointment, Dr. Ravindra Ramchandra Bangar served as the Principal Commissioner at the Palghar GST & CX Commissionerate under the Mumbai Zone.

He entered Group 'A' service on Sept 07, 1996. He is an alumnus of IIT Bombay (Electrical Engineering) and IIM Calcutta (PGDM). He holds a doctorate degree, providing a strong academic foundation for his administrative career, and has also completed a course in Security Analysis and Portfolio Management.

His leadership marks a vital phase for the Mysuru CGST & CX Commissionerate in streamlining indirect tax administration and supporting the local trade ecosystem. His vast administrative expertise, combined with a proactive and collaborative approach toward the trade sector and departmental officers, will undoubtedly foster a robust and thriving local trade ecosystem.

TEPPOTSAVA AT GAPATHI ASHRAM HELD

MYSURU

As part of the 27th Brahmotsava celebrations of Sri Datta Venkateshwara Kshetra, a grand Teppotsavafor Lord Venkateshwara was organized on Thursday at the Saptarshi Sarovara in the Ganapathy Sachchidananda Ashram.

Hundreds of devotees witnessed this event. The idol of Lord Venakteshwar was placed inside the tepa and it was taken out in the Sarovara.

DK Fans held special prayers for smooth swearing in ceremony

MYSURU

Members of the Akhila Karnataka Vokkaligara Sangha, Mysuru district unit, on Thursday offered special prayers at the historic 101 Ganapathi Temple in Agrahara, in Mysuru praying for D. K. Shivakumar to take oath as the Chief Minister of Karnataka on Friday without any hurdles.

As part of the rituals, devotees performed a special pooja and broke 101 coconuts at the temple. The members said that D.K. Shivakumar, a loyal Congress worker for over four decades, has stood by the party through difficult times and has worked tirelessly as the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president, playing a key role in the party securing more than 135 seats in the state.

The prayers were offered seeking a smooth and successful swearing-in ceremony for the senior Congress leader. The programme was led by Akhila Karnataka Vokkaligara Sangha district president Tejesh Lokesh Gowda. Among those present were K.N. Nagegowda, Bogadi Siddegowda, Sinduvalli Shivakumar, Krishnappa, Varakoodu Krishnegowda, Girish H., Somegowda, Hanumanthaiah, Narayan Gowda, Kumar Gowda, Basavaraju, Thyagaraj, Hombegowda, Neha, Sujatha, Padma, Shivaram Gowda, Shivaraj, Ravish, Subbegowda, Chandrashekhar, Ramesh, Kedar, Prabhakar, Shivalingaiah, Srinivas and others.

MLA Srivatsa promises more support for cultural organisations in Mysuru

MYSURU

Stating that development of cultural institutions is a collective responsibility, Krishnaraja Constituency MLA T.S.Srivatsa said that the funds allocated for renovation of cultural centres were nothing but public money being returned for public benefit.

He was speaking at the Vasudevacharya birth anniversary and music celebration programme organised by Nada Brahma Sangeetha Sabha in Mysuru on Thursday evening.

Expressing happiness over the renovation works taken up at Nada Brahma and Kalabharati auditoriums through MLA funds, Srivatsa said Mysuru's music venues should not lag behind modern auditoriums elsewhere in the country. "People from across the State come here to attend music programmes. In this scientific and modern age, nobody should feel that our auditoriums are inferior," he said.

The MLA clarified that he had not done anything extraordinary and described his role "like that of a postman" in utilising public funds for cultural causes. He also assured that painting and additional renovation works at Nada Brahma would be taken up in the next phase of funding.

Recalling his recent visit to the house of renowned composer Mysuru Vasudevacharya, the MLA said he was surprised to learn that the legendary musician's residence was located close to his own house. Efforts were being made to renovate the house and preserve its heritage value.

He noted that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Kannada and Culture Minister Shivaraj Thangadagi and District Minister Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa had already announced government support for the initiative.

Srivatsa also appreciated the participation of Mysuru-Kodagu MP Yaduveer Krishnadatta Chamaraja Wadiyar at the inauguration programme held at Bidara Krishnappa Mandir. He said the MP had assured financial assistance of around Rs. 20 to 25 lakh for the project after visiting the venue.

The MLA further said plans were being discussed to expand the Vasudevacharya music festival in the coming years by involving music schools and students across Mysuru and organising a larger two-day cultural event.

Several music lovers attended the programme organised in memory of Mysuru Vasudevacharya.

VIP ENTERS KARNATAKA POLITICS, HINTS AT CONTESTING 70 SEATS

MYSURU

Karnataka's political arena has witnessed the entry of another regional outfit with the official launch of the Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP), a party claiming to represent the aspirations of extremely backward and nomadic communities in the State. Positioning itself as an alternative to Congress, BJP and JD(S), the party asserted that future governments in Karnataka may eventually require its support for survival.

Addressing a press conference in Mysuru on Thursday, VIP State Vice-President Mohan Kumar B.K. accused mainstream political parties of neglecting backward communities despite using them as "vote banks" for decades. His party would function under the ideals of Maharshi Valmiki, Ambigara Chowdaiah, Basavanna, Buddha and Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

Highlighting the lack of political representation, Mohan Kumar claimed that the Koli, Gangamatha and Bestha communities together account for nearly 60 to 70 lakh people in Karnataka, yet do not have even a single MLA in the Assembly. The dominant castes alone continue to enjoy political power while smaller and nomadic communities remain sidelined.

The VIP leader also launched a sharp attack on leaders who championed the "AHINDA" ideology — representing minorities, backward classes and Dalits. Without naming anyone directly, he alleged that leaders who rose to power in the name of backward communities ultimately restricted benefits to their own caste groups. What had been done for the State's 154 backward communities and 46 nomadic communities in terms of representation, welfare boards and funding?.

Warning major political parties ahead of future elections, Mohan Kumar said the VIP was prepared to independently contest in 60 to 70 constituencies if denied a fair share in seat allocation within the opposition alliance. Claiming that nearly two crore voters belong to extremely backward and smaller communities, he expressed confidence that the party could win between 10 and 20 seats and emerge as a decisive political force. "Even if we do not win, we have the strength to defeat others," he warned.

Citing the party's success in Bihar, where VIP leaders have secured ministerial positions, Mohan Kumar said a similar political movement would be built in Karnataka by uniting backward communities.

The party also announced a grand inaugural convention on June 7 at Ashok Hotel in Bengaluru, expected to be attended by over 100 seers, pontiffs and community leaders from across the State.

"MUSIC AND LITERATURE ARE LIKE 2 WHEELS OF A CART": KAVEMSRI

MYSURU

Renowned poet Dr. Ka.Vem. Srinivasamurthy observed that music and literature are like the two wheels of a cart, complementing each other in creating meaningful art.

He was speaking after inaugurating a special "Geetha Sanje" programme organised at Purabhavan on Thursday by the Karnataka Sugama Sangeetha Parishat District Unit and Sri Anantheshwara Trust to introduce his literary and poetic world to music and literature lovers.

Srinivasamurthy said that both music and literature are equally important for light music. "No poet writes songs merely for entertainment or commercial purposes. If done so, they become paper flowers and not natural blossoms. Such programmes not only present the songs of a poet but also introduce audiences to the poet's ideology and philosophy. All forms of art possess the power to transform the minds and hearts of people.

Presiding over the programme, Sugama Sangeetha Parishat District President Nagaraj V. Bairi described Dr. Srinivasamurthy as a distinguished poet and writer who has carved a unique niche in Kannada literature. He said the poet has beautifully preserved the essence of Kannada language while expressing modern-day pain, emotions, humanity and social values in a simple yet deeply touching manner.

He added that the poet's literary works vividly reflect the philosophy of life, social realities and the subtleties of human relationships. Apart from literature, Dr. Srinivasamurthy has also made notable contributions in criticism, public speaking and intellectual discourse. His lectures and poetry recitations at various literary forums have won the admiration of audiences, while his efforts to instil values in the younger generation through literature continue to inspire many, he said.

President of Mysuru Chamber of Commerce and Industry K.B. Lingaraju, District Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Maddikere Gopal, senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar, social worker K. Raghuram Vajapeyi and poet Jayappa Honnali were among the chief guests.

Under the musical direction of singer Shwetha Dinesh, artistes including C.M. Narasimhamurthy, S.V. Erriswamy, H.V. Tirumalesh, Ningaraju, Geetha Lakshmi Kini, Sujatha Jayakumar, Rekha, Padma Rao, Joyce Thomas, S. Shwetha and Nethravathi rendered soulful performances of the poet's compositions. Akashvani announcer G.N. Manjunath compered the programme.

The evening turned into a vibrant celebration of poetry and melody with songs such as Sharadadevi Geethe, Haridide Noda Kannada Rathavu, Hasiru Chiguride, Ninna Kanna Hoobana, Nalla Neenondu Kavana, Kannadadannava Undavare, Malesuriyali Hole Hariyali and several other popular compositions captivating the audience.

QUICK READ

CM Siddaramaiah resigns, Minister Santosh Lad leaves in tears

CH NEWS, Bengaluru
Minister Santosh Lad, who was emotional after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's resignation announcement, left in his car crying without responding to the media. Siddaramaiah announced his resignation as Chief Minister at a breakfast meeting at his government residence, Kaveri, this morning. The Chief Minister also delivered a farewell speech at the meeting. Minister Lad was seen crying emotionally during this too. Apart from Minister Lad, all the other ministers left after the breakfast meeting.

Water adalats in various subdivisions on May 29

CH NEWS, Bengaluru
The Bangalore Water Board has organised water adalat in various subdivisions on May 29 from 9.30 am to 11 am. The South-East-3 Sub-Division Adalat will be held at Kudli GLR premises, South-East-6 BTM 2nd phase, West 1-3 Agrahara Dasarahalli, North 2-3 GKVK Manyata Tech Park, South 1-3 Anjanapur Bank Officers Layout, South-West-3 MNK Park, Girinagar, South-West-6 Banashankari 6th phase, East 2-4 Sub-Division Adalat will be held at Vijinapur. Complaints regarding grievances can be filed by calling 1916, the release said.

Vokkaligara Sangha general body meet on May 31

CH NEWS, Bengaluru
The State Vokkaligara Sangha has organised a General Body meeting on May 31 at 11 am at Palace Grounds, Gayatri Vihara and Gayatri Vriksha.
Speaking at a press conference, Association President L Srinivas said, a general meeting is being held after 11 years. An all-member meeting was not held after 2016 due to various reasons. Now our committee has called an all-member meeting to present the administration report. A special all-member meeting will be held after 3 pm that day. There are 6.5 lakh members in the association, and they should attend the meeting with their identity cards. Honorary President of the Association Kenchappa Gowda, General Secretary of the Association CG Gangadhar and office bearers were present.

Peenya back under GBA as govt rolls back industrial township plan

Barely a year after granting 'Industrial Township' status to Peenya Industrial Area by declaring it a special investment region, the govt has withdrawn the decision.

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

In a notification issued by the Urban Development department said, the proposal announced earlier by the commerce and industries department to notify Peenya as a special investment region and transfer its administration to the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) cannot be implemented.The govt stated that the Peenya Industrial Area already falls within the jurisdiction of corporation limits. Hence, the area cannot be brought under KIADB or any other authority by taking it out of the civic administration framework. The rollback is seen as a setback to efforts aimed at creating a dedicated industrial township for one of Asia's largest industrial clusters, which continues to face major civic infrastructure issues, including poor roads, drainage and waste management problems. The notification stated apart from Peenya, 17 other special investment regions announced by the Industries Department will continue to be governed under the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act-2024, the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act-1976, and the Karnataka Municipalities Act-1964.

The respective local bodies and municipal corporations will continue to exercise administrative powers in these areas, including levy and collection of property taxes and other civic responsibilities.

R Shiva Kumar, former President of the Peenya Industries Association, said the government's decision to declare Peenya as a special investment region had brought no change on the ground for industries in the area. The government had promised formation of a 15-member committee, but industries were given representation only through two members while the majority were govt officials. Even that committee was never formed, he said. He alleged that though KIADB has been collecting taxes, there is no clarity on how the funds are being utilised or any concrete plan for infrastructure improvement.

Criticising the poor condition of roads in the industrial hub, he said infrastructure remains neglected despite its economic importance. Peenya industries are located close to the national highway, but even village roads are in better condition than roads here," he claimed.There was hope for an industrial township authority on the lines of the Electronics City Industrial Township Authority (ELCITA), but that model never materialised. On the latest proposal to bring Peenya under the Greater Bengaluru Authority framework, Shiva Kumar said industry representatives are yet to receive clarity from the government.

God has fulfilled our wish: Hussain on DKS becoming CM

BENGALURU

Congress MLA Iqbal Hussain on Wednesday said that good times have come by the grace of God and claimed that party leaders had fulfilled what people across the state wanted.

Speaking to the media regarding DK Shivakumar reportedly becoming the Chief Minister, he said there is a limit to everything. He added that the party high command had told us to stay calm and speak only when the time comes. Now that time has arrived." He said senior leaders should come to Bengaluru, after which discussions would be held before a decision is taken in consultation with party workers. He further said that everyone must maintain party discipline.

Cong betrays trust of BCs: Bommai

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

Siddaramaiah's resignation as Chief Minister will have an impact on the Congress party and the electoral politics of Karnataka.

Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai has opined that the Congress has betrayed the trust of the backward classes and the backward classes will turn against the Congress.

Speaking to the media, he said that the Congress party has betrayed the trust of the backward classes. Especially, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, campaigns in favour of the OBCs. However, the OBCs have uprooted the Chief Minister. It has now been revealed that he is shedding crocodile tears about the backward classes. The backward classes are upset by this and they are responding sharply saying that they will teach the Congress a lesson in the 2028 elections.

He said that the leadership change in the state has weakened the ruling party, adding that the BJP will come to power in the state in 2028 with its own strength and even stronger.

Responding to a question about the instructions given to state leaders by BJP national president Nitin Nabin during his visit to the state, he said that the national president has instructed the party organisation to be organised from the booth level to the state level.

GBA chief sets 25-day deadline to open Okalipuram underpass to vehicles

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

Rao has directed the officials to complete the pending work soon, besides setting a deadline to complete the white topping work of Dr Rajkumar Road by Oct end.

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed the officials to complete the pending works under the railway bridge of the Okalipur eight-way Corridor near Majestic within 25 days.

After visiting and inspecting various development works under the jurisdiction of Central and Western Municipal Corporations, he said that the Railway Department has already completed 2 box pushing works at the bottom of the bridge. Accordingly, he instructed the officials to complete the construction of a connection road for vehicular traffic in 1 box section of the route from Majestic towards Rajajinagar within 25 days.

At the same place, the construction of a connection road for the box road leading towards the KSR Bangalore Railway Station, the construction of a 1,200 mm diameter water channel for rainwater drainage, a retaining wall of about 63 m long and the construction of a footpath should be completed within the time limit. He told the officials to start the construction of a new pedestrian overbridge at the same place.

Complete one side of the 1.8 km long white topping work from Dr Rajkumar Road from Navarang to Star Bazaar signal by the end of July and open it to vehicular traffic. Then, he instructed the officials to complete the work on the other side by the end of October. He instructed the officials to properly maintain the 425 m long white topping from Chitrapur Cross to 18th Cross Road.

The then BBMP had started the construction of an eight-lane signal-free corridor at Okalipur Junction near Majestic in 2013-14. Now, six lanes are open for vehicular traffic. However, the construction of two underbridges on the Chennai railway line was pending. Now, it is almost complete.

This will facilitate passengers who will have direct access to the railway station from Malleshwaram and Rajajinagar and to platforms 6, 7 and 8 of the railway station from Majestic.

Muslim brothers offer mass prayers on Bakrid

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

Bakrid, a symbol of sacrifice, is being celebrated with great enthusiasm and fervor across the state today. Muslim brothers and sisters in various cities participated with devotion.

Wearing new clothes, a large number of Muslim brothers and sisters gathered in all the mosques and Eidgah grounds early in the morning to offer mass prayers.

In some mosques, separate arrangements were made for women to offer Eid prayers.

After the prayers, they exchanged festive greetings. Religious leaders conveyed the festive message, taught about the celebration of Bakrid and the importance of charity and religion.

Eid greetings to all religious people. This festival is celebrated during the holy Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca. Islam says that one should perform the Hajj pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime. The religious rituals of Hajj conclude with this festival. Let us pray to Allah that this festival of sacrifice will bless us all with health and wealth. May this festival bring good fortune to all the people of the country and prosperity to the country, the religious leaderse wished.

Greetings to all the Muslim brothers and sisters of the country on the occasion of Bakrid. I hope that this holy festival, which is a symbol of sacrifice and self-sacrifice, will inspire peace, harmony and brotherhood to prevail in the society, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah posted.

Eid-ul-Adha Mubarak. May this holy occasion bring peace, happiness and prosperity to you and your family, many including Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar have posted.

Testing of smart 'gobbler' cleaning machine begins

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

The new battery-operated Smart Litter Picker machine was demonstrated on Commercial Street as part of Bengaluru's wider push towards smarter and technology-driven urban cleaning systems across the city.

Bengaluru has taken another step towards improving urban cleanliness with the trial run of a new Smart Litter Picker machine named "Gobbler." Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao inspected the live demonstration of the machine on Commercial Street.

Officials clarified that the demonstration was conducted on Commercial Street as part of a pilot project, but the initiative is aimed at improving cleanliness across major roads and commercial zones throughout Bengaluru.

The new machine is being introduced under the directions of Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar, as part of the city's larger effort to modernise sanitation and civic maintenance using smart technology.

Authorities said the Gobbler is a battery-operated smart cleaning machine specially designed for urban roads and crowded public areas. Once fully charged for about three hours, the machine can function continuously for nearly eight hours.

The Smart Litter Picker is also equipped with a GPS tracking system, allowing civic officials to monitor its movement and operational efficiency during field deployment.

Officials highlighted that one of the key advantages of the machine is its ability to operate smoothly even on narrow and crowded roads where larger cleaning vehicles face difficulties. The machine can collect several forms of roadside waste including dust, plastic materials, paper waste and dry leaves.

The Gobbler machine is fitted with a 240-litre waste collection container and also includes a water pressure cleaning system for better road maintenance and surface cleaning.

Following the demonstration, officials were instructed to conduct pilot operations of the machine on several important roads and market areas across Bengaluru's Central Business District. These locations include MG Road, Church Street, KR Market, Russell Market and other major public stretches.

3 ARRESTED FOR ATTACKING WOMAN

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

After a video of two-wheelers parked in a public place being damaged by being hit with a stick went viral, the VV Puram police station, which had registered a suo motu case, arrested three accused.

The real story of the hooliganism came to light during interrogation.

On the morning of May 20, in Venkatappa Galli under VV Puram police station limits, accused Abhishek, Puneeth and Umesh had damaged two-wheelers parked in public by hitting them with sticks. During this, they had blocked the bike rider Vignesh and abused him with abusive words. The incident was captured on CCTV.

Following the video going viral on social media, the police registered a spontaneous case and arrested the accused. When they were questioned, it was revealed that Abhishek had conspired with his accomplices to threaten his brother's wife. Police said that two separate cases have been registered and the investigation is ongoing.

His brother's wife has filed a complaint against the accused Abhishek, accusing him of assaulting her. Based on this complaint, the V.V. Puram police have registered a case. The complainant woman fell in love with the accused's brother Rahul and married him six years ago and lives with her mother-in-law and brother-in-law in Parvatipura with two children. However, due to a family dispute between the couple, her husband Rahul left her a month ago. The woman had earlier filed a complaint against her husband, alleging that he assaulted her.

On the other hand, on the evening of May 19, after seeing that his brother Rahul had not come home, accused Abhishek had lashed out at the woman. He had shouted that you were the reason for ruining my brother's life, and that you were not coming home after filing a complaint against him. That is why you should not be at home, Abhishek had shouted. He had abused her with abusive words and attacked her. To scare her, on May 20, he had gathered his associates and damaged parked vehicles with deadly weapons.

SETBACK FOR PROJECT

Flower market on horti land: HC issues notice to govt

CH NEWSBENGALURU

A petition has been filed in the High Court challenging the process of sanctioning more than 20 acres of land belonging to the Horticulture Department near Nandi Cross, adjacent to Chikkaballapur city, for the construction of a flower market by the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC).

Hearing a public interest litigation filed by six local farmers, including farmer B Tippareddy from Tippenahalli in Chikkaballapur taluk, a bench comprising Justice S Sunil Dutt Yadav and Justice S. Rachaiah issued a notice to the government and directed it to file objections.

During the hearing, the counsel for the petitioner said, there have been intensive activities to hand over more than 20 acres of land in various survey numbers of Nandi Hobli and Yaluvanahalli to the APMC. Currently, this land, which is under the possession of the Horticulture Department, has 791 large trees of various species that are more than 49 years old. The APMC officials have sought permission from the Forest Department to cut these valuable trees. Therefore, this land should be directed to remain with the Horticulture Department.

Considering this point, the bench ordered notices to be issued to the Chief Secretary of the state government, the Principal Secretary of the Horticulture Department and the Chikkaballapur Deputy Commissioner and adjourned the hearing to June 1.The Horticulture Department's land earmarked for the flower market has trees and plants that are more than 40 to 45 years old. These include the best varieties of sapota, mango, jackfruit, and violet trees. A soil testing center, a farmer training center, and a poly house are also functioning.

Molestation of minor: Cinema owner's bail plea dismissed

CH NEWS, Bengaluru

The High Court has refused to grant anticipatory bail to a 52-year-old accused of sexually harassing a ninth-grade student, hurling casteist insults and threatening to kill him with an acid attack.

A single-member bench headed by Justice R Nataraj, which heard the petition filed by 52-year-old N Manjunath, the owner of Shankara Cinema in Ramanagara, dismissed the petition and ordered.

Moreover, if we look at the statements given by the victim and the case documents, there is prima facie strong evidence against the accused. Following the complaint, some boys were sent to the house and caste abuse and threats were made. In this context, it has been stated that in cases registered under the SC/ST Act, if the crime is prima facie confirmed, anticipatory bail will not be possible.

However, the accused can apply for bail in the trial court. The court has instructed that this application should be considered according to law.

Manjunath, the owner of Shankara Cinema in Ramanagara and a farmer, used to wait near the school of a minor girl studying in class 9, indecently touch her and follow her around.

QUICK READ

GRUHALAKSHMI SCHEME

Ensure benefits reach only eligible scheme beneficiaries

CH NEWS, Bangarapet Guarantee Schemes Com mittee taluk president Parthasarathi directed officials to ensure that benefits under the Gruhalaks hmi and Gruhajyoti sche mes reach only eligible beneficiaries through pro per verification and review. Speaking at a taluk-level review meeting on implementation of guarantee schemes at the Taluk Pan chayat hall, he said the government introdu ced the five guarantee schem es for the welfare of poor families and officials must work efficiently to de liver them effectively. He said eligible women beneficiaries are receiving Rs 2,000 monthly under the Gruhalakshmi sche me, while food grains are being distributed as per rules under the Anna Bhag ya scheme.

Mobile health unit aims for early disease detection

CH NEWS, Shira
A mobile healthcare initiative titled "Wellness on Wheels" was launched at the Government Public Hospital in Shira to help detect diseases before they become severe. The programme is jointly organised by the Health and Family Welfare Department, Volvo Group, and Narayana Health. Hospital Administrative Medical Officer Dr. Babu Rajendra Prasad said rural residents often delay treatment due to financial difficulties and travel constraints. The mobile unit will visit villages and provide early scree ning for heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and hypertension. The facility offers free tests including ECG, 2D Echo, digital X-ray, cancer screening, and over 25 blood tests.

Pedestrian killed after car hits him in Haveri

CH NEWS, Haveri
A pedestrian was killed after being hit by a car near Gaurapur village in Haveri taluk. The deceased has been identified as Fakkeerappa Bharamappa Marilingannavar, a resident of the village. According to reports, Fakkeerappa was walking along the roadside when an unidentified car allegedly struck him and fled the scene. He died on the spot due to the impact of the collision. Police have registered a case at the Haveri Rural Police Station and launched an investigation to trace the vehicle involved in the accident. Further inquiry is underway to determine the exact circumstances surrounding the incident.

Health officials launch dengue, cervical cancer campaigns

Health officials launched a dual campaign targeting dengue eradication and free cervical cancer vaccines for young girls

SRIRANGAPATNA

Local health officials launched a massive twin-campaign , targeting the eradication of deadly dengue fever and promoting life-saving cervical cancer vaccines for young girls.

Inaugurating the National Dengue Day event at the Taluk Health Office, In-charge Health Officer Dr. M. N. Ashalata stressed that public participation and environmental cleanliness are vital. She urged school students to actively inspect their surroundings twice a week. Dr. Ashalata noted that destroying breeding grounds like stagnant water in cement tanks, plastic drums, discarded tires, and coconut shells is crucial to stopping the disease at its roots.

Adding to this, Chief Medical Officer Dr. C. M. Sridhar explained that because dengue has no specific cure, controlling the Aedes aegypti mosquito is the only defense. He called for total community cooperation in keeping neighborhoods dry and clean.Earlier, Dr. Sridhar kicked off an awareness rally at New Oxford School focusing on the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine. The government is currently providing this safe, essential vaccine completely free of charge to young girls aged fourteen and fifteen. Health experts emphasized that this vaccination plays an invaluable role in protecting women from developing cervical cancer later in life.

The dual-purpose health drive saw passionate participation from school principal Mrs. Aishwarya, numerous teachers, medical officers, and dedicated local ASHA workers. Organizers deemed the event a major success, noting that educated students will now act as health ambassadors, taking these vital prevention messages directly back to their households.

The Karnataka State Farmer's Union condemned Tamil Nadu's opposition to the Mekedatu project, urging PM Modi's immediate intervention.

Karnataka farmers demand immediate Mekedatu project clearance

MANDYA

The Karnataka State Farmer's Union strongly condemned the Tamil Nadu government for its persistent opposition to the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project. Shanthakumar Kirangoor Pappu, a prominent leader of the agricultural union, urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene and grant immediate clearance for the project.

The statement comes after Tamil Nadu's Health Minister publicly lobbied central authorities to disapprove the reservoir, claiming the extra water storage is unnecessary. Karnataka farmers reacted sharply, calling the neighboring state's political opposition completely baseless and unjust.

Local experts emphasize that the Mekedatu project is designed to store excess Cauvery River water during heavy monsoon seasons. Instead of wasting surplus water into the sea, the reservoir would secure vital drinking water for urban and rural citizens, replenish drying groundwater tables, and provide essential hydration for cattle, local wildlife, and birds.

"The project will not harm Tamil Nadu's fair share of water," Pappu stated in an official press release. "It is a crucial humanitarian initiative for drinking water and ecological survival."

Frustrated by the ongoing political deadlock, agricultural groups are demanding unified action from local leaders. They urged the state government to send a high-level delegation, including irrigation experts, legal advocates, and senior ministers, to meet directly with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the Prime Minister. Farmers warned that delaying the project further will trigger severe water scarcity, risking the livelihoods of millions of citizens who depend on the Cauvery basin.

Congress leaders demand minister post for ARK MLA

KOLLEGAL

Congress leaders and party workers staged a gathering near Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Circle in Kollegal demanding a ministerial berth for Kollegal MLA A.R. Krishnamurthy during the anticipated cabinet expansion. Former City Municipal Council presi dent Rekha Ramesh said the Kollegal constituency has never received ministerial representation despite significant development works carried out by the MLA. Block Congress president Thotesh claimed Krish namurthy had secured nearly Rs 500 crore in grants for constituency development and deserved cabinet inclusion. Leaders also pointed out that no Dalit MLA from the constituency had been given a ministerial post for the past five years.

Emotional supporters weep as Siddaramaiah resigns

MYSURU

Heartbreaking scenes unfolded outside 'Cauvery', the official residence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, as he prepared to depart for Lok Bhavan to tender his resignation. The usually bustling political hub wore a somber look, packed with weeping supporters waiting for a final glimpse of their leader, affectionately nicknamed 'Huliya'.

When Siddaramaiah finally emerged alongside his son, Dr. Yathindra, an overwhelming wave of grief swept through the crowd. Breaking through tight police security, distraught men and women rushed forward, sobbing like children just to touch his hands.

"Sir, you are our hope, please don't leave us," cried an elderly farmer from North Karnataka. Another emotional woman supporter stated that for the poor, Siddaramaiah was simply family. The intense outpouring of love deeply moved the veteran politician, whose eyes visibly filled with tears before he composed himself for the television cameras.

Even the on-duty police personnel appeared touched, gently managing the crowd as roaring slogans of "Huliya, Huliya" and "Our leader Siddaramaiah" echoed through the air. Many stood frozen in grief as the official convoy slowly rolled away toward Lok Bhavan.

Siddaramaiah shared a uniquely deep emotional bond with the masses, built on his fearless political style, blunt speeches, and earthy humor. The iconic title 'Huliya' (Tiger) was originally coined by a fan during a past election rally. For the thousands gathered, Thursday's departure was not just the routine resignation of a state leader, but a painful goodbye to their protector.

MLA Srinivas Mane launches Hanagal development projects

HANAGAL

In a major boost to local infrastructure, Hanagal taluk has received an unprecedented amount of funding to upgrade its public amenities, announc ed local MLA Srinivas Mane.

The lawmaker made this statement during a groundbreaking ceremony in Araleshwar village, launching a series of development projects worth ₹50 lakh. Mane explained that rural connectivity roads had fall en into deep disrepair, causing severe travel issues for local re sidents. To fix this, the govern ment is now releasing development funds on a priority basis. Reflecting on his journey, Mane shared that he traveled through the taluk on foot for 52 days during his 'Dhutsankalpa Yatra' before the 2023 elections. This march allowed him to witness the struggles of villagers firsthand. He assured the public that those identified pro blems are now being resolved step by step. The event marked a significant milestone for the region's growth, drawing strong support from local political figures. Pro minent leaders, including KPCC member Talkanagowda Patil and Block Congress President Manju Gorannavara, attended the ceremony to support the new projects.

Udupi escapes rain fury with zero damage

UDUPI

An official weather report from Udupi confirmed no casualties, property damage, or infrastructure disruptions despite recent light to moderate rainfall across the coastal district.

A preliminary weather report released by the Udupi District Deputy Commissioner's office brought immense relief to local residents, confirming no casualties or property damage despite recent rainfall across the coastal region.

According to official data, the district witnessed light to moderate showers, averaging 4.6 mm of rainfall across various taluks.

Hebri recorded the highest downpour at 11.5 mm, followed closely by Kundapur at 6.2 mm and Udupi taluk at 5.2 mm. Other areas experienced much lighter showers, with Karkala recording 4.0 mm, Brahmavar 2.6 mm, Byndoor 0.7 mm, and Kaup receiving a mere 0.1 mm of rain.

Fortunately, the precipitation did not escalate into a crisis. The administration confirmed that there was absolutely no loss of human life, and no injuries or missing persons were reported due to rain, strong winds, or lightning strikes. The local livestock also remained entirely safe.

Furthermore, infrastructure and agriculture emerged unscathed from the spell of rain.

The report indicated zero damage to houses or household goods, and no crop losses were recorded anywhere in the district.

Essential services remained completely unaffected, with no re ports of breached lake banks, disrupted road connectivity, or major power outages.

Consequently, authorities did not need to open emergency care centers or conduct any citizen evacuations.

Water levels, inflows, and outflows at all major regional reservoirs also remain well within safe limits, ensuring a secure and stable situation for the coastal district.

Dr. B.M. Shivarudrayya conferred with Aryabhata award

MAGADI

Renowned educator and retired principal Dr. B.M. Shivarudrayya has been conferred with the prestigious state-level 'Aryabhata Award' in Bengaluru. The honor recognizes his exceptional contributions to rural education and his lifelong dedication to spreading scientific awareness.

The grand award ceremony took place at the iconic Ravindra Kalakshetra, organized by the Aryabhata Cultural Organisation. Dr. Shivarudrayya received the plaque and traditional shawl from a distinguished panel, including High Court Justice Rajendra Badamikar, thinker Aralumalige Parthasarathy, and former Kannada Sahitya Parishad President Dr. Mahesh Joshi. Aryabhata Society President Dr. H.L.N. Rao praised the veteran educator for simplifying complex subjects like mathematics and science through innovative, activity-based teaching. He also commended Dr. Shivarudrayya's persistent efforts to build a scientific tempe rament among rural communities. Accepting the honor, Dr. Shivarudrayya stated that teachers must look beyond classrooms and prioritize community development. He emphasized the urgent need to inspire rural students toward science and mathematics, noting that this award has significantly increased his responsibility toward society.

Local leader Baginagere B. Rangaswamy proudly highlighted that Dr. Shivarudrayya, who previously won the Kempegowda and H.N. Narasimhaiah awards, serves as a flawless role model for today's youth. The achievement has sparked widespread joy across the taluk, drawing warm congratulations from local MLA H.C. Balakrishna, Kannada Sahitya Parishad members, various science associations, and the residents of Baginagere village.

BSP leader celebrates Bakrid at Eidgah Maidan

KOPPAL

Highlighting the spirit of sacrifice and togetherness, BSP Koppal District In-charge Mehboob Khan joined thousands of local devotees for a mass special prayer. The grand gathering took place at the city's Eidgah Maidan to celebrate the holy festival of Bakrid. Following the peaceful community prayers, Khan met with the respected religious guru, Qazi Asif, who led the morning service. Khan honored the spiritual leader and warmly exchanged festive greetings with him and other members of the gathering. Addressing the media and attendees, Khan emphasized that festivals serve as a powerful bridge between different communities.

National Surfing Championship begins

MANGALURU

The highly anticipated seventh edition of the NMPA Indian Op en of Surfing 2026 is set to kick off at Blue Bay, Tannirbhavi Eco Beach, running from May 29 to 31. This premier national event will feature over 80 top athletes representing six coastal states, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Goa. This year's championship carries immense weight, serving as the final domestic evaluation before surfing makes its historic debut at the upcoming Asian Games in Japan.

Power struggle grips Karnataka Congress over Cabinet

MYSURU

Intense political maneuvering has gripped the ruling Congress party even before D.K. Shivakumar takes the oath as Karnataka's next Chief Minister. Following Siddaramaiah's resignation to honor their power-sharing pact, lawmakers are aggressively lobbying for coveted ministerial berths.

To maintain regional and caste balances, party sources reveal that the high command might introduce an unprecedented formula of appointing three to four Deputy Chief Ministers. Frontrunners for these top posts include senior Lingayat leader M.B. Patil, Housing Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, and IT-BT Minister Priyank Kharge.

While Shivakumar reportedly resists expanding this structure, pressure from Delhi may force his hand. Furthermore, top leader Rahul Gan dhi is pushing for a youth-hea vy cabinet, aiming to introduce nearly 28 fresh faces under the age of 50. This generational shift could drastically alter the regional landscape. From the Mysuru region, Tanveer Sait and MLC Yathindra Siddaramaiah are likely to secure cabinet spots, potentially replacing veteran leader H.C. Mahadevappa.Major reshuffles are also expected in neighboring districts.

In Chamarajanagar, C. Puttarangashetty may replace K. Ven katesh, while Mandya's N. Cheluvarayaswamy might lose his seat to P.M. Narendraswamy. Meanwhile, Roopa Shashidhar, daughter of K.H. Muniyappa, could enter under the women's quota. While senior ministers like Dinesh Gundu Rao and K.J. George are expected to retain their positions, uncertainty surrounds Home Minister G. Para meshwara and Lakshmi Hebbal kar due to internal rivalry. Strategists note that this high-stakes cabinet selection will ultimately decide who controls Karnataka's power structure for the next decade.

MAGADI DEVELOPMENT ROW

Magadi Congress accuses Manjunath of halting projects

MAGADI

Local Congress leaders have launched a sharp attack against former MLA A. Manjunath, accusing him of using aggressive tactics to halt essential development projects in the region.

Speaking at a press conference, Magadi Block Congress President K. Krishnamurthy slammed the former lawmaker for trying to stall a vital national pipeline project. The initiative, brought to life by former MP D.K. Suresh, aims to lay a Cauvery water pipeline from Sattegal to the Dabaspet industrial area. Once completed, this network will secure clean drinking water for Magadi's town and rural residents.

Krishnamurthy also praised current MLA H.C. Balakrishna for spending ₹1 crore to clean up the polluted Machanabele reservoir, which was neglected during Manjunath's tenure.

He assured citizens that contractors have already deposited ₹12 crore to completely rebuild roads damaged by the pipeline work.

Adding to the criticism, Kudur-Thippasandra Block President T.G. Venkatesh urged the opposition to stop misleading the public with false promises.

He reminded everyone that the current water supply is the result of two years of hard work by Balakrishna and Suresh. Venkatesh challenged the former MLA to focus on real issues, like lobbying Union Minister H.D. Kumara swamy to stop more trains at Thippasandra and securing the Hemavati Express Canal project.

"The people working in these industries are our own children," Venkatesh said, emphasizing that opposing local progress hurts future generations. Party leaders Kalkere Shivanna, H.R. Shivaprasad, and Rehman Khan were also present to show their solidarity.

QUICK READ

NGT issues notice over construction in Palamu Tiger Reserve

Ranchi

A case related to the construction of hotels and resorts in Jharkhand's Netarhat eco-sensitive zone and Palamu Tiger Reserve has now reached the National Green Tribunal (NGT). According to a petition filed by environmental activist Govind Pathak, large-scale commercial construction is being carried out within the eco-sensitive zone (ESZ) in violation of prescribed norms. Taking cognisance of the matter, the eastern zonal bench of the Kolkata-based NGT has found the petition fit for hearing and has issued notices to the parties concerned. The next hearing in the case is scheduled for July 8. The issue is about the rapid construction activities in and around the Palamu Tiger Reserve, Betla National Park, Netarhat and the Mahuadanr Wolf Sanctuary.

IB official sheds light of ISI's new recruitment model

New Delhi

The number of arrests in connection with ISI-backed espionage cases has gone up substantially in the last one year. The ISI has been resorting to various tactics to appoint spies in India, who in turn are paid or blackmailed to provide sensitive information from the country. An Intelligence Bureau (IB) official said that there are a bunch of recruiters and handlers based out of Pakistan whose primary job is to monitor those making reels on social media. These persons understand the mindset of most of these people and are taking advantage of that to trap or lure them into becoming spies for Pakistan. These persons who make reels only care about engagement. This is something that the ISI has been using to trap such persons. Scores of fake accounts are created on these social media sites and these accounts are used to keep the engagement high.

Sikkim police gets 'President of India's Police Colour'

Gangtok

President Droupadi Murmu presented the 'President of India's Police Colour' to the Sikkim Police in Gangtok on Thursday. The recognition awarded to Sikkim Police is a result of its substantial role in upholding peace and harmony within the state, characterised by their professional behaviour and the amicable attitude of police officers towards the public, which has garnered both affection and respect from the citizens. President Murmu congratulated all officers and police personnel associated with the Sikkim Police in the past and present for this honour and said she was happy to note that the force, since its establishment in 1897, has worked to ensure peace, security, and justice in Sikkim.

Maharashtra's single women policy: First in India

The government approved a committee to draft a dedicated policy ensuring welfare and empowerment of single women

MUMBAI

In a significant move aimed at strengthening the welfare and empowerment of single women, the Maharashtra government has approved the formation of a Draft Committee for the proposed 'Single Women Policy'.

The initiative is expected to address the social, economic, educational and health-related challenges faced by single women across the state through a structured and comprehensive framework.

Minister of Women and Child Development Aditi Tatkare announced the decision on Thursday, stating that the proposed policy would help single women gain easier access to various government welfare schemes while also recommending long-term measures for their overall development. She highlighted that Maharashtra is preparing to become the first state in India to formulate an exclusive policy dedicated entirely to single women.

Tatkare explained that discussions regarding such a policy had initially begun during the tenure of the late Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. According to the minister, the vision and ideas proposed during those discussions laid the foundation for the present initiative. Following his demise, efforts to continue the programme remained active, eventually leading to the establishment of the draft committee.

The committee will function under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of the Women and Child Development Commissionerate in Pune. It will include senior officials and representatives from multiple government departments and institutions, including School Education, Social Justice, Agriculture, Labour, Tribal Development, Rural Development, Urban Development, Skill Development, Industries, Higher and Technical Education, Revenue, Animal Husbandry and the National Health Mission.

In addition, representatives from the Maharashtra State Legal Services Authority, Maharashtra State Women's Commission, MAVIM, UMED, Khadi and Village Industries and several other organisations will also be part of the committee. The Deputy Commissioner of the Women and Child Development Commissionerate in Pune will serve as the Member Secretary.

Expressing confidence in the initiative, Tatkare stated that the committee would play a transformative role in shaping a strong and practical policy draft capable of bringing meaningful and lasting change to the lives of single women throughout Maharashtra.

She further said that the policy would now move forward under the leadership of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis while continuing the developmental vision associated with Ajit Pawar. The minister described the initiative as a matter of pride for Maharashtra and a landmark step toward inclusive social welfare.

Punjab BJP confident of victory in 2027 elections

CHANDIGARH

Newly appointed Punjab BJP President Kewal Singh Dhillon on Thursday asserted that the Bharatiya Janata Party would emerge victorious in the Punjab Assembly elections scheduled for 2027 and form the next government in the state.

Displaying confidence in the party's growing support base, Dhillon stated that after securing success in West Bengal, the BJP was now preparing to strengthen its presence in Punjab.

Addressing reporters after assuming charge, Dhillon said Punjab was currently facing multiple challenges, including drug abuse, unemployment, gangster activities and issues related to farmers. He claimed that people in Punjab were observing the development taking place in states governed by the BJP and desired similar progress in their own state.

Today, Punjab is suffering from drug menace, rise of gangsters, joblessness and farmers' issues. Development is taking place in 21 states wherever the BJP is in power. The same will happen in Punjab when the BJP forms the government, Dhillon said.

He further stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President Nitin Nabin shared a common vision of transforming Punjab into the leading state in the country. After Bengal, it is now the turn of Punjab, he remarked while expressing optimism about the party's electoral prospects.

Targeting rival political parties, Dhillon alleged that the Aam Aadmi Party, Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal had collectively damaged Punjab's progress over the years. According to him, only the BJP possessed the capability to restore development and stability in the state.

New Punjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillon expressed confidence about forming government in the state after 2027 elections

The veteran leader also stressed that his focus would remain entirely on development rather than political theatrics. I cannot do drama or crack jokes. My only goal is to work for Punjab's progress, he said.

Dhillon added that Punjab still possessed the strength and potential to regain its earlier position as one of the country's leading states. Referring to the BJP government in neighbouring Haryana, he highlighted that the state had become the first in India to officially procure 24 crops at the Minimum Support Price.

He promised that if the BJP formed the government in Punjab, farmers would receive MSP support, employment opportunities would expand and semiconductor plants would be established to strengthen industrial growth.

On questions regarding the BJP's limited performance in the previous Assembly elections, where the party secured only two seats, Dhillon said the people of Punjab had already decided to give the BJP a majority mandate in the next election.

Adhikari offers prayers at Mayapur ISKCON Temple

KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Thursday visited the ISKCON temple in Mayapur, situated in Nadia district, where he participated in several religious rituals and interacted with temple monks.

The visit marked his first trip to the temple after assuming office as the Chief Minister.

Adhikari arrived at the temple premises in the afternoon and was welcomed warmly by ISKCON monks with flower garlands and traditional greetings. During his visit, he took part in special prayers and rituals conducted according to temple traditions. The Chief Minister later visited the cowshed located within the ISKCON complex and performed Gau-Seva in the presence of the monks.

As part of the ritual, Adhikari washed the cows' feet with water and personally fed them. The ceremony was attended by several monks and devotees who gathered at the temple premises. Following this, the Chief Minister proceeded to the Chandrodaya temple inside the complex and offered prayers before the idols of Radha and Krishna.

He also paid tribute to ISKCON founder Abhay Charanaravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada by performing rituals at his memorial temple and offering floral tributes to his statue. Temple authorities said the Chief Minister showed deep interest in the spiritual activities and functioning of the organisation during his visit.

Extensive security arrangements were made throughout the temple premises because of the Chief Minister's presence. Despite the heightened security, devotees visiting the temple reportedly did not face any inconvenience.

The ISKCON monks presented Adhikari with a statue of Gaumata as a mark of respect and appreciation. According to temple representatives, the Chief Minister was also scheduled to participate in discussions with the monks later in the day regarding spiritual and social activities undertaken by the organisation.

Speaking about the visit, ISKCON spokesperson Rasik Gauranga Das said this was the Chief Minister's first visit after taking oath and that all rituals were performed according to temple customs. He added that Adhikari was keenly interested in understanding the activities and functioning of ISKCON.

The visit comes just days after Adhikari announced that liquor shops would not be permitted within one kilometre of educational institutions and temples across the state.

CBI detained Giribala Singh after anticipatory bail cancellation in Twisha Sharma dowry death investigation case

CBI detains retired judge in dowry death case

BHOPAL

In a major development in the alleged dowry death case involving Twisha Sharma, the Central Bureau of Investigation on Thursday detained retired district judge Giribala Singh from her residence in Bhopal.

The action came shortly after the Madhya Pradesh High Court cancelled the anticipatory bail earlier granted to her in connection with the investigation.

A CBI team, accompanied by a large police force, arrived at Giribala Singh's residence in the Katara Hills locality early in the morning. Authorities barricaded the surrounding area and restricted public movement during the operation to maintain law and order.

The case relates to the death of Twisha Sharma, who was found dead at her matrimonial home on May 12, barely five months after marrying Samarth Singh, the son of Giribala Singh, on December 9, 2025. The incident had triggered widespread attention due to allegations of dowry harassment and domestic abuse.

Soon after the incident, Giribala Singh approached a Bhopal sessions court seeking anticipatory bail. On May 15, the 10th Additional Sessions Judge granted her pre-arrest bail, citing her advanced age and financial transfers made to the deceased. However, the Madhya Pradesh High Court later quashed the relief in a detailed 17-page order.

Vacation judge Devnarayan Mishra observed that the trial court had failed to properly consider crucial material facts before granting bail. The High Court referred to WhatsApp chats and statements from Twisha's family, which allegedly indicated that the accusations were not confined solely to her husband, Samarth Singh.

The court further stated that the allegations required deeper examination under Sections 80(2), 85 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, along with Sections 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act.

Twisha's family alleged that both her husband and mother-in-law subjected her to harassment and allegedly pressured her to terminate her pregnancy. The High Court noted that it was an admitted fact that Twisha had terminated her pregnancy before her death.

According to the post-mortem report, the cause of death was antemortem hanging by ligature. However, the High Court also noted the presence of six to seven additional injuries on Twisha's body, including injuries on her arm, finger and head. A subsequent medical query report clarified that these injuries were not caused while removing the body or during transportation to the hospital.

Counsel representing Twisha's father argued that Giribala Singh, being a retired judicial officer with training in cyber forensics and crime scene management, might have tampered with the crime scene.

Guj rules out Ebola scare as Congo traveller's test returns negative

AHMEDABAD

The suspected Ebola case involving a 37-year-old businessman from Congo in Gujarat has tested negative, State Health Minister Praful Pansheriya said on Thursday, easing concerns after four people were placed under quarantine as a precautionary measure.

The businessman, identified as Amuri Lokula, had recently travelled from Congo to Mumbai before visiting Silvassa, Daman and Vadodara.

According to details shared by the Health Department, he arrived in Mumbai around 10 days ago, stayed there for five days and later spent around four days in the Silvassa-Daman region before reaching Vadodara on May 22.

Pansheriya said the report of the suspected Ebola patient had returned negative and urged people not to panic or spread rumours. Citizens are requested not to panic in any manner and to stay away from rumours. They should trust only the official information issued by the Health Department, the minister said.

The state government and the Health Department are fully alert, prepared and committed to safeguarding public health, he added. A Health Department source told IANS that only the businessman who had arrived from Congo was tested for Ebola and that the report had come negative at present.

Rest three reports are already negative, the source said, referring to the three individuals who had been quarantined after coming in contact with the businessman.

State authorities had quarantined four people, including the businessman from Congo, after he developed fever following his travel from Africa. Officials had said all four were isolated at separate facilities in Ahmedabad as a precautionary measure and samples had been sent for testing.

The state government had also intensified screening measures at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPIA) for passengers arriving from Ebola-affected countries, including Congo, Uganda and South Sudan.

Isolation wards were kept ready at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, Surat Civil Hospital and SVP Hospital as part of preparedness measures. Health authorities across India have stepped up surveillance and monitoring after suspected Ebola cases were reported in Gujarat and Bengaluru, although no confirmed Ebola case has been reported in the country so far.

'KISI MOD PE PHIR MULAQAAT HOGI'

Noted Urdu poet Bashir Badr dies at 91

BHOPAL

Renowned Urdu poet Dr Bashir Badr, known for his expressive and evocative 'shayri' passed away in Bhopal on Thursday afternoon, leaving behind a rich literary legacy that spanned decades. He was 91.

He breathed his last at around 12 noon at the age of 91. According to family members, Badr had been suffering from dementia for a long time, a condition that gradually eroded his memory and left him unable to recognise even close acquaintances. His health had been deteriorating steadily in recent months, and despite medical care, his condition worsened until his demise.

The funeral arrangements are yet to be finalised, though family sources indicated that the last rites may be performed later on Thursday only.

His passing marks the end of an era in Urdu poetry, as Badr was celebrated for his evocative verses, like Ujale apni yaadon ke hamare saath rahne do/Na jaane kis gali mein zindagi ki shaam ho jaaye, or Kai sitaron ko main jaanta hoon bachapan se/Kahin bhi jaaun mere saath saath chalte hai, or Sar jhukaoge to patthar devtaa ho jaayega/Itna mat chaaho use wo bewafa ho jaayegaa, Khuda ham ko aisi khudaai na de/Ki apne siva kuch dikhai na de, Kuch to majbooriyan rahi hongi/Yun koi bewafa nahi hota, and many more, that captured the complexities of love, longing, and human emotion with unmatched simplicity and depth.

His literary journey was not only prolific but also profoundly inspiring, influencing generations of readers and writers alike.

With the passing of Dr. Bashir Badr, a glorious chapter of the modern Urdu ghazal comes to an end

A familiar figure in 'mushairas' across India, he was much admired for the art with which he not only recited his sparkling couplets, but frequently elaborated on their creation and his inspiration.

Born in 1935, Bashir Badr rose to prominence in the post-Independence period, becoming one of the most widely read and quoted poets in contemporary Urdu literature. His ghazals, often laced with poignant reflections on life and relationships, earned him admiration across India and beyond. He was known for bridging the gap between classical traditions and modern sensibilities, making Urdu poetry accessible to a broader audience.

His couplets, frequently shared in everyday conversations and on social platforms, remain etched in public memory. Despite his illness in later years, Badr's contributions continued to resonate, reminding admirers of the enduring power of words.

Infiltration plunged sharply after change of govt in Bengal: Shah

He credited the new state administration for quickly handing over border land to the BSF to accelerate fencing along the Bangladesh border to improve national security

GANDHINAGAR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said the newly-formed BJP government in West Bengal had handed over 600 hectares of land to the Border Security Force (BSF) within just seven days of coming to power to accelerate fencing work along the Bangladesh border.

He described the move as a major step towards strengthening national security and fulfilling promises made during the election campaign.

Addressing a public gathering at Sonipur village in Gujarat's Gandhinagar district, Shah said the BJP government had acted swiftly after coming to power in West Bengal. He stated that the party had assured voters during the election campaign that border fencing work would begin immediately if the BJP formed the government in the state.

"We had promised during the election campaign that if governance was handed to us, fencing work along the Bangladesh border would begin within a few days," Shah said while speaking at the inauguration and foundation stone laying ceremony for development projects worth Rs 340 crore.

The Union Home Minister congratulated West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari for facilitating the transfer of land to the Border Security Force in a short period.

Shah also revealed that an additional 121 hectares of land in the strategically important Chicken Neck region had been handed over to the Central government for security-related infrastructure development.

Linking the development to the BJP's broader national security strategy, Shah claimed that infiltration activities along the Bangladesh border had reduced significantly after the change in government in West Bengal. He alleged that infiltration was widespread during the tenure of the previous Trinamool Congress government.

"Earlier, under Mamata's rule, infiltration took place every day, but now infiltrators are themselves starting to return," he stated during his address.

The Home Minister also used the occasion to underline the BJP's political expansion across the country. Referring to the recent Assembly elections in West Bengal, Shah claimed that the BJP had decisively defeated the Trinamool Congress government and strengthened its political presence in the eastern region.

"Today, the BJP governs 80% of the country's geographical area. Most recently, elections were held in Bengal, where Didi's government was completely wiped out," he said.

Shah further remarked that the BJP's influence had expanded across the entire Ganga belt, stretching "from Uttarakhand to Gangasagar."

During his visit to Gandhinagar, the Union Home Minister participated in multiple development programmes, including the inauguration of drinking water facilities, upgraded Anganwadi centres and village development projects in the Kalol and Gandhinagar North Assembly constituencies.

QUICK READ

BJP takes 'century of defeats' swipe at Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday took a swipe at Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition (LoP) Rahul Gandhi, saying that the latter will soon complete a "century of defeats" in the next election. The reaction followed as several Congress leaders, like Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, have frequently projected LoP Gandhi as the leader who can head the INDIA bloc. However, other members of the Opposition alliance, including the Samajwadi Party and the Trinamool Congress, have displayed reluctance towards this. BJP chief spokesperson Navnath Ban said: "The leadership of the INDIA Bloc should be given to Rahul Gandhi because, as you know, he has lost 99 per cent of the elections so far.

BJP names first-time MLA Debroy as its Tripura prez

Agartala

In a move that surprised political circles in Tripura, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday appointed party MLA Abhishek Debroy as the new President of the BJP's state unit, replacing Rajib Bhattacharjee, who is also a Rajya Sabha member. JP National General Secretary and party headquarters in-charge Arun Singh, in a statement issued from New Delhi, said that BJP National President Nitin Nabin has appointed Abhishek Debroy as the President of BJP Tripura Pradesh. The appointment of a new state BJP President in Tripura had long been overdue, with several names doing the rounds in political circles over the past many months for the crucial organisational post. The 44-year-old Debroy, a first-time MLA, was elected from the Matarbari Assembly constituency in Gomati district of southern Tripura in the 2023 Assembly elections.

Multiple Aadhaar cards found inside locked TMC office on Kolkata

KOLKATA

Multiple Aadhaar cards were recovered from a Trinamool Congress party office in Kolkata's Tangra area on Thursday, triggering questions among local residents.

According to reports, the office on East Kuliya Road had remained locked since the declaration of the Assembly election results on May 4. A section of locals broke open the lock and entered the premises, where the Aadhaar cards were found inside a cupboard.

The recovery of Aadhaar cards drew a crowd outside the Trinamool office, with several residents expressing surprise over how the documents ended up there. Some said they already possessed their original Aadhaar cards, while others claimed they had not received theirs despite completing the process.

The police were soon informed. An investigation into the incident has already been launched.

One local alleged that although his daughter's Aadhaar card had been issued, it never reached him, raising suspicion that the cards were withheld after delivery. There were also unverified claims from some residents that the documents might have been misused.

Police have been informed, and an investigation is underway into the matter. There has been no official reaction from the Trinamool Congress so far.

The party office falls under the Beliaghata Assembly constituency. Local sources said it was earlier used by Trinamool leader Jiban Kumar Saha, but has seen little activity since the elections, with few party members visiting the premises. Questions have also been raised about why such a large number of Aadhaar cards were kept inside a political party's office. Some residents claimed the documents might have been intended for creating fake voter identity cards, though there has been no official confirmation of these allegations so far.

Ex-min Natarajan joins TVK; AIADMK cries horse trading

CHENNAI

In a fresh political setback for the AIADMK, former Tamil Nadu Tourism Minister and senior party leader, Vellamandi Natarajan, joined the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in the presence of the party's general secretary N. Anand, intensifying speculation over continuing realignments within the Opposition camp.

A prominent leader from Tiruchi, Natarajan had been associated with the AIADMK for several decades

A prominent leader from Tiruchi, Natarajan had been associated with the AIADMK for several decades and was considered a loyal grassroots organiser in central Tamil Nadu.

He was elected from the Tiruchi East Assembly constituency in 2016 and later served as Tourism Minister in the AIADMK government headed by late Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa. Following Jayalalithaa's death in 2016, Natarajan sided with former Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam during the intense power struggle within the AIADMK. However, after Panneerselvam aligned with the DMK ahead of the 2026 Assembly election, Natarajan returned to the Edappadi K. Palaniswami-led AIADMK fold.

Despite his return, the continuing internal crisis within the party appears to have pushed him towards the TVK. According to party sources, Natarajan met TVK general secretary N. Anand late on Wednesday night and enrolled himself in the ruling party.

Speaking to reporters after joining the TVK, Natarajan said the AIADMK had failed to recover from repeated internal divisions and electoral defeats after Jayalalithaa's demise.

"I have been in the party for a long time. After Jayalalithaa's death, the party split and has since suffered continuous defeats. I repeatedly suggested that all leaders should sit together and decide the future course collectively, but my views were not accepted. Even after the election, the party split again. All this is not good for the movement," he said.

Praising the TVK leadership, he added that the party had embraced the ideological legacy of leaders such as Periyar, C.N. Annadurai, M.G. Ramachandran and Jayalalithaa, which influenced his decision to join the ruling camp.

Natarajan's move comes at a politically sensitive time, with the AIADMK already facing turbulence after four of its MLAs recently resigned and joined the TVK.

AIADMK MP Dhanpal has demanded a detailed probe by central agencies into the defections, alleging large-scale horse-trading and financial inducements by the ruling party to engineer defections in Tamil Nadu politics.

'Speed-up rollout of Jan Vishwas reforms in legal metrology'

NEW DELHI

The Centre's Department of Consumer Affairs held a meeting with the southern states including Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana as well as the Union Territory of Puducherry, to review implementation of reforms introduced under the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 through the, according to an official statement issued on Thursday.

The meeting focused on implementation of the new registration-based framework, decriminalisation of minor procedural offences and introduction of 'Improvement Notices' and the expansion of Government Approved Test Centres (GATCs) and Digitisation of Legal Metrology services. Besides, it also took up the issue of capacity building.

The Department reviewed implementation of the newly introduced "Improvement Notice" mechanism under the Jan Vishwas reforms. Under this provision, first-time procedural violations under specified sections of the Legal Metrology Act would attract an 'Improvement Notice' before any penal action is taken.

The reform aims to encourage voluntary compliance, reduce litigation and improve Ease of Doing Business while protecting consumer interests.

During the discussions, states were requested to ensure that the shift from "licensing" to "registration" reflects a genuine trust-based and facilitative regulatory system. It was emphasised that registrations should be granted automatically on submission of prescribed documents, without unnecessary delays or prior inspections.

States were requested to expedite amendments to their Enforcement Rules and GATC Rules in line with the amended Legal Metrology framework. Participating States informed that the revised rules are in advanced stages of drafting and approval and are expected to be notified shortly.

The Department further urged States and UTs to notify their GATC Rules at the earliest and expand the scope of instruments covered under the GATC mechanism. This is expected to strengthen verification infrastructure, improve availability of verifiers and enable faster service delivery to industries, traders and consumers.

During the meeting, it was also clarified that the Legal Metrology Act, 2009 does not provide for inter-state verification of weights and measures, unlike the repealed Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976. Accordingly, Government Approved Test Centres (GATCs) approved by the Director of Legal Metrology, Government of India, can undertake verification and re-verification only within the State or UT for which approval has been granted. The clarification was issued to ensure uniform implementation of the framework and avoid operational ambiguity regarding the jurisdiction of GATCs.

Anand Mohan lambasts JD(U) leadership

PATNA

Former Member of Parliament and influential Bihar leader Anand Mohan has once again openly expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership of the Janata Dal United, triggering fresh political speculation within the party.

His remarks came despite the Bihar government recently granting Deputy Minister status to his son, Chetan Anand.

Speaking to reporters in Patna on Thursday, Anand Mohan defended his earlier controversial statements and asserted that he stands firmly by every remark he makes publicly.

He accused certain sections of the media of selectively presenting his comments in a distorted manner. "I speak with deliberation and forethought. I stand by every statement I make," Anand Mohan stated while addressing questions regarding his criticism of the party leadership.

Responding to controversy surrounding his recent remarks on "bribe-based politics," he launched a sharp attack on his critics. "I do not deem it necessary to respond to every barking dog," he remarked, further intensifying the political debate.

4 ARRESTED IN MANIPUR HOSTAGE CASE

IMPHAL

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Thursday said four suspected individuals believed to be involved in the kidnapping of six Naga civilians have been arrested by security forces.

He assured that the state is treating the matter with utmost seriousness and that large-scale search operations are underway to rescue the abducted civilians safely.

He told reporters at Makhan Naga village in Kangpokpi that police and other security agencies have launched coordinated operations in several areas to trace the missing civilians. He added that investigations are progressing rapidly to identify and arrest all those responsible for the incident that took place on May 13. "The investigations are underway to nab the culprits involved in the unfortunate incident," Singh said while assuring the affected families that the government shares their concerns and emotions regarding the hostage crisis.

The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the abducted civilians would be traced soon and stated that security agencies are intensifying combing and rescue operations in sensitive areas. The kidnapping incident has raised fresh concerns in Manipur, which has witnessed prolonged ethnic tensions and displacement in recent months.

During his visit, he also interacted with internally displaced persons currently taking shelter at the Makhan Baptist Church in Makhan Naga. The relief camp houses Naga women and children from Konsakhul village who were reportedly taken hostage earlier and later released by armed cadres.

MOVING WITH CHANGING TIMES

Bakrid namaz moves from Red Road to Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata

KOLKATA

Kolkata witnessed a change in arrangements for Eid al-Adha (Bakrid) prayers on Thursday, with namaz held at Brigade Parade Ground instead of the customary Red Road venue, for the first time in years.

After several years, the prayers were not conducted on Red Road, where they had traditionally been held twice a year during Eid ul-Fitr and Eid al-Adha -- under previous regimes, including the Left Front (1977-2011) and the Trinamool Congress (2011-2026).

During the Trinamool Congress's rule, then-Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee attended the Red Road gatherings twice a year. In earlier years, the use of open roads for congregational prayers often led to traffic disruptions in central Kolkata.

In fact, this time, nowhere in Kolkata was the Bakrid Namaz organised on open roads, which often caused traffic jams during the previous years.

Kolkata Police had extensive security arrangements in place across the city, including Brigade Parade Ground and its adjacent areas, to ensure law & order was maintained on the occasion.

Additional police personnel had been deployed all over the city, especially at places adjacent to mosques. Drones have been used for aerial surveillance.

In fact, after taking oath as Chief Minister of West Bengal, Suvendu Adhikari announced that the new state government will not allow any religious gathering on the road, causing inconvenience to the public at large due to the traffic congestion it creates.

The impact of this announcement was felt in Kolkata on Thursday, with the Bakrid Namaz organised at Brigade Parade Ground and not on the Red Road, as was the earlier practice.

Last year, the office of the Eastern Command of the Indian Army, having the administrative authority of the Red Road, asked the Khilafat Committee to arrange an alternative place for Eid Namaz due to security reasons.

However, Mamata Banerjee then said that she would try to convince the Eastern Command authorities to give permission, but her rule ended after defeat in the polls, as a result of which the Bakrid Namaz was performed at the Brigade Parade Ground.

ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರಕಾರ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಇಲಾಖೆ
ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕುಟುಂಬ ಕಲ್ಯಾಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಕಛೇರಿ,
ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ಅಜ್ಜರಕಾಡು, ಉಡುಪಿ–576101.
e-mail: dhoudupi-hfws@karnataka.gov.in Ph No: 0820-2525566/2536650
No: DHO/UDUPI/48/2026-27 Date: 25-05-2026

ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆಯ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಅಭಿಯಾನದ, 15ನೇ ಹಣಕಾಸು ಆಯೋಗದ, PM-ABHIM ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮಗಳ ಅನುದಾನ ಮತ್ತು ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಪಂಚಾಯತ್ ಅನುದಾನದಡಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲಾ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಮತ್ತು ಕು.ಕ ಕಛೇರಿ, ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಅನುಷ್ಠಾನಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಛೇರಿಗೆ, ವಿವಿಧ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅಗತ್ಯವಿರುವ ಲೇಖನ ಸಾಮಾಗ್ರಿ, ಕ್ಯಾಟ್ರಿಡ್ಜ್, ಬಳಕೆ ಸಾಮಾಗ್ರಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸ್ವಚ್ಛತಾ ಸಾಮಾಗ್ರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆಗಳಿಗನುಸಾರವಾಗಿ 1 ವರ್ಷದ ಅವಧಿಯವರೆಗೆ ಪೂರೈಸಲು ಅರ್ಹ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆಗಳಿಂದ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಪಬ್ಲಿಕ್ ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ ಮೂಲಕ ಎರಡು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್ ಸ್ವರೂಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಉಚಿತ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ನಮೂನೆಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮತ್ತು ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ವೆಬ್‌ಸೈಟ್ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ನೋಡಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ. ಅಂದಾಜು ವೆಚ್ಚ: ರೂ. 60,00,000/–, ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ: ರೂ. 1,20,000/–

(1) ಆಕ್ಷೇಪಣೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 29/05/2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 04–00 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (2) ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಸಾಮಾಗ್ರಿಗಳ ಮಾದರಿ ಪರಿಶೀಲನೆಗೆ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 30/05/2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 4–00 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (3) ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅರ್ಜಿ ಹಾಕಲು ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09/06/2026ರ ಪೂರ್ವಾಹ್ನ 11.00 ಘಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ (4) ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಬಿಡ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 11/06/2026 ಪೂರ್ವಾಹ್ನ 11.30 ಘಂಟೆಯ ನಂತರ

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ಉಡುಪಿ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ.

ವಾಸಾಇ/ಸನಿಉ/ಕೆಎಸ್ಎಂಎ/127/26–27 ದಿ: 27.05.2026

QUICK READ

Inflation raises Eid cemetery visit expenses

Rawalpindi

Families in Rawalpindi are struggling with rising costs ahead of Eid as prices of flowers, incense sticks, rose water and grave coverings used during cemetery visits have sharply increased. Flower petals are being sold for nearly Rs500 per kilogram, while decorative grave sheets cost around Rs1,400. Grave cleaning charges have also risen to about Rs500. Residents said inflation has made traditional religious practices difficult to afford. Citizens also criticised authorities for poor maintenance of graveyards, with overgrown bushes and weeds making several burial grounds difficult to access.

India assists patient's safe return from Saudi

Riyadh

The Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia helped repatriate an Indian national, Sufiyan Ahmed, who suffered a brain haemorrhage and was undergoing treatment at King Fahad Hospital in Al Hassa. The embassy arranged a stretcher ticket and travel support for his medical escort to ensure his safe return to Mumbai for further treatment. In a post on X, the embassy said it made every possible effort to assist the patient. Officials confirmed that Ahmed reached Mumbai safely and wished him a speedy recovery. India also said maritime operations remain normal across ports.

Jaishankar explores co-op in 'multipolar world order'

The External Affairs Minister discussed stronger India-European Union ties and both sides exchanged views on practical collab.

LIMASSOL

wIndia's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar joined European foreign ministers at the informal Gymnich meeting in Limassol, Cyprus, where leaders discussed growing cooperation between India and the European Union.

In a post on X, Jaishankar said the partnership between India and Europe continues to expand across many sectors. He added that both sides exchanged views on practical collaborations and common interests in an emerging multipolar world order.

Jaishankar attended the meeting at the invitation of European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kaja Kallas and Cyprus Foreign Minister Constantinos Kombos.

The Gymnich meeting was co-chaired by Kombos and Kallas. Ministers discussed several international and regional issues, including economic cooperation, security concerns and diplomatic coordination among partner nations.

During his visit, Jaishankar also held separate meetings with foreign ministers from France, Poland, Romania, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Estonia. He met European Commission Vice President Kaja Kallas and reviewed India-European Union ties

along with the current situation in West Asia.

European Union Ambassador to India Herve Delphin said the discussions reflected the close relationship between New Delhi and Brussels.

The Indian minister also met Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha and discussed the ongoing Ukraine conflict and bilateral cooperation.

He later held talks with Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud regarding developments in West Asia and the Middle East. Jaishankar appreciated Saudi Arabia's assessment of the changing regional situation and exchanged views on recent developments affecting the area.

India has been increasing diplomatic engagement with European countries in recent years through trade, technology, connectivity and strategic partnerships. The participation of Jaishankar in the Gymnich meeting highlighted India's growing importance in global discussions involving Europe and West Asia.

Officials believe regular dialogue between India and European nations will strengthen cooperation in areas such as security, energy, maritime trade and investment. The meetings in Cyprus also provided an opportunity for leaders to exchange views on current international conflicts and regional stability. Both sides expressed interest in maintaining stronger diplomatic coordination in the coming years.

Doval calls for unified global action against terrorism

MOSCOW

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on Thursday said there cannot be double standards in the global fight against terrorism and urged countries to take strong action against terror groups and their supporters.

Speaking at the 1st International Security Forum and the XIV International Meeting of High-Ranking Officials Responsible for Security Matters in Moscow, Doval described terrorism as one of the biggest threats to international security. He said every country has a responsibility to fight terrorism without selective approaches. Referring to the April 22 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam, Doval said India has long suffered from state-sponsored terrorism. He stated that 26 innocent civilians were killed in front of their families after being targeted based on religion.

India-Singapore hold Defence Policy Dialogue, reaffirm robust bilateral co-op

SINGAPORE

India and Singapore reaffirmed their strong defence partnership during the 16th Defence Policy Dialogue held in Singapore on Thursday. Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh co-chaired the meeting with Singapore's Permanent Secretary (Defence) Joseph Leong.

According to the Ministry of Defence, both sides held detailed discussions on defence cooperation, security collaboration and ways to further strengthen strategic ties between the two countries. The ministry said the dialogue reflected the growing and robust bilateral relationship in defence and regional security matters.

In a post on X, the Ministry of Defence stated that the meeting covered several important areas of cooperation and explored new opportunities for expanding defence engagements between India and Singapore. Officials also discussed regional security architecture and strategic coordination in emerging domains.

During the visit, Rajesh Kumar Singh toured the Digital Operations Technology Centre of the Digital and Intelligence Service of the Singapore Armed Forces. The ministry said the visit provided valuable insights into Singapore's advanced digital and technical military capabilities.

Aus Defence Minister to visit India for key defence talks

CANBERRA

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles will visit India for the second Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The Australian Defence Ministry said the meeting reflects the growing defence partnership and shared commitment between both countries to improve cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Before arriving in India, Marles will attend the 23rd Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. Organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the annual event is considered one of the most important defence and security forums in the Indo-Pacific region. Leaders and defence officials from several countries gather there to discuss global security challenges and possible responses.

During the Singapore meeting, Marles is expected to speak on maritime security issues during a plenary session focused on Asia's maritime challenges. He will also hold discussions with regional and international defence leaders on strategic and security matters affecting the Indo-Pacific.

India-Australia aim to strengthen defence ties, improve regional security, enhance military coordination, and promote peace and stability across Indo-Pacific.

Marles said Australia remains committed to strengthening diplomatic and defence ties with partner nations, especially India. He described India as one of Australia's top security partners and said he looked forward to meeting Rajnath Singh again after the strong progress achieved during Singh's visit to Australia last year.

The first Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue was held in Australia in October 2025. According to the Australian Defence Ministry, the meeting highlighted major progress in bilateral defence relations since both countries elevated ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2020.

India and Australia aim to strengthen defence ties, improve regional security, enhance military coordination, and promote peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific through continued cooperation.

Pak tax policies hurt business growth

SINDH

Pakistan's current tax policies are putting heavy pressure on the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, especially the food industry, according to Hyderabad SITE Association of Trade and Industry Chairman Zubair Ghangra. He said the Federal Board of Revenue's withholding and advance tax system has become a major challenge for industrial growth and business survival.

Speaking about the issue, Ghangra said the taxation structure has created serious operational difficulties across the supply chain. Manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors are facing increasing financial pressure, while a large section of the retail market continues to operate outside the documented economy.

According to Ghangra, thousands of unregistered retailers are functioning without proper accountability, forcing registered businesses to bear most of the tax burden. He said this imbalance has increased operational costs for organised companies that are already struggling with inflation and declining consumer demand.

N. Korea rejects Quad call for nuke disarmament

SEOUL

North Korea on Thursday rejected the Quad nations' call for complete denuclearisation and declared it would never abandon its nuclear weapons programme.

The response came after foreign ministers of India, Australia, Japan and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to North Korea's denuclearisation during the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi earlier this week.

According to South Korean news agency Yonhap, North Korea's foreign ministry criticised the Quad statement and accused the grouping of interfering in its internal affairs. Pyongyang described the Quad as a political and diplomatic tool supporting American dominance in global affairs.

A spokesperson for North Korea's foreign ministry said there would "never, ever" be denuclearisation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The ministry also rejected what it called the "hostile stance" of the US-led Quad and urged the group to stop actions that could damage regional peace and stability.

Iran terms US strikes as 'gross violation' of truce

TEHRAN

Iran on Thursday accused the United States of violating a ceasefire agreement and carrying out attacks on Iranian territory and commercial shipping routes.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei described the alleged American actions as a serious breach of international law and the United Nations Charter, according to reports.

Baghaei said the reported attacks included strikes near Bandar Abbas and aerial operations in southern Iran during recent days. He stated that such actions violated Iran's territorial integrity and national sovereignty. He also called on the United Nations Security Council to hold the United States accountable for the alleged aggression.

The spokesperson further accused Washington of violating the ceasefire on April 19 through attacks on commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf and nearby international waters. He said Iran would continue to defend its sovereignty under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Iranian media also reported that Baghaei criticised recent statements by American officials and expressed support for Oman after former US President Donald Trump allegedly warned the country against interfering in Strait of Hormuz negotiations.According to Iran's Tasnim News Agency, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps launched strikes on an American base after alleged US attacks near Bandar Abbas Airport.

Israel activates massive underground wartime hospital Facility

HAIFA

Rambam Health Care Campus, northern Israel's largest medical centre, has activated its fortified underground emergency hospital designed to function during wartime conditions.

The underground complex, built after the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war, can accommodate nearly 2,000 to 2,200 patients and operate independently during emergencies.

According to hospital officials, the facility normally functions as a parking structure but can be converted into a fully operational hospital within 72 hours. The underground hospital is designed to continue functioning even during chemical or biological attacks.

Nursing Director Ravit Idelman said the facility was created after the difficulties faced during the 2006 conflict, when patients and staff had to work under constant threat. She explained that the underground structure contains three floors and is also used by five other hospitals in the region during emergencies.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHASHIKUMAR H S S/o H R SIDDAPPA R/o Suragondanakoppa, Chinnikatte, Honnali, Davangere, Karnataka-577225, have changed the name of my minor son YASHAS RAJ K S aged 10 years and he shall hereafter be known as ARYA K S.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, MANJUNATH KARANTH, Passport Vide No. ZA530549 aged about 51 years, S/o. Late K Ramakrishna Karanth, residing at No.1/2, Lalitha Nivas, 8th Main Road, CHBCS Layout, Near Ganesha Temple, Vijayanagar, Bangalore North, Bangalore-560040, hereby declare that **MANJUNATH KARANTH and MANJUNATHA** both the names belong to one and the same person i.e., myself only. And continue my name in future as **MANJUNATH KARANTH** vide affidavit dated: 27.05.2026 before advocate & notary B.C. Mahesha, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME

It is for general information that I, STEVE ZAKARIAH MONSON S/o MOANUNGSANG ZAKARIAH, R/o 78 Ground Floor, 6th Main, Near Shanimahatma Temple, Nagapura Mahalakshmipuram, Mahalakshmipuram Layout, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560086, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as ZAKARIAH in my CBSE class 10th Educational Documents. The actual name of my father is MOANUNGSANG ZAKARIAH, which may be amended accordingly.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, UDAYAKUMARI D/o MUNIRAJU, R/o 23, Harananda Royal Palace, Bannerghatta Road, Near Pattalamma Temple, Kalkere, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560083, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ANJALI.

PUBLIC NOTICE / WARNING

It is hereby informed to the general public that my client Sri. A.S.SUDHEENDRA, M/S SUMAYA PROPERTIES MYSURU, had issued a Blank Cheques bearing No's. 461977,461978 and 461979 drawn on Vijaya Bank, BOB CA, in favour of Smt. Annapoorna Srikanth, w/o S Srikanth Gupta (AADHAAR NO: 3546 6737 1736) which was duly issued in connection with a transaction which is completed and the said cheques has not been returned.

It has come to my client's knowledge that there are misleading statements/ claims suggesting misuse of the said cheque. I hereby clarify that the said cheque was issued only towards a genuine transaction which has already been completed, and therefore there is no question of misuse.

Any person dealing or relying upon any contrary claims shall be doing so at their own risk and responsibility. The issuer of the cheque shall not be liable for any loss or consequence arising there from.

This public warning is issued to prevent any misuse, misrepresentation or confusion in respect of the above-mentioned cheque.

RAVI S. PATEL
ADVOCATE, MYSURU.
9880010007
26-05-2026

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EID DIPLOMACY

Modi extends Eid greetings to B'desh PM

DHAKA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended warm Eid-ul-Azha greetings to Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and the people of Bangladesh, reaffirming India's commitment to stronger bilateral relations and people-focused cooperation.

In a message shared through Bangladesh state-run news agency BSS, Modi said Eid-ul-Azha is an important part of India's rich cultural heritage and is celebrated with happiness by millions of Muslims

across the country. He said the festival represents the values of sacrifice, compassion and brotherhood, which are important for building a peaceful and inclusive society.

Modi also highlighted the close ties between India and Bangladesh. He said both neighbouring countries share a relationship built on common history, cultural connections and shared sacrifices. He added that India is committed to working closely with Bangladesh in different sectors for the benefit of people in both nations.

The Prime Minister expressed hope that the shared development goals of India and Bangladesh would continue to support peace, growth and prosperity in the region. He also wished good health and happiness to Tarique Rahman and continued peace and progress for the people of Bangladesh.

Eid-ul-Azha, also known as Bakra Eid, is one of the most important festivals in Islam. It is observed on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the final month of the Islamic lunar calendar, and marks the completion of the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mecca.

The festival commemorates Prophet Abraham's willingness to make a sacrifice in obedience to God. Muslims across the world celebrate the occasion through prayers, charity, family gatherings and acts of kindness, while also promoting forgiveness, unity and social harmony among communities.

QUICK READ

TRAI extends deadline for V2X consultation comments

New Delhi

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has extended the deadline for submitting comments on its vehicle-to-everything (V2X) consultation paper to June 4, 2026, while counter-comments can be filed until June 18. The consultation paper was issued on April 30, and the extension follows requests from stakeholders seeking additional time. V2X technology enables communication between vehicles, infrastructure, pedestrians, and networks to improve road safety and traffic efficiency. India recorded a 25 per cent rise in connected car sales in 2024, according to Counterpoint Research, highlighting growing demand for smart mobility and connected vehicle technologies.

UK may resist Sunil Mittal's bid to raise BT stake

New Delhi

The UK government is likely to oppose any move by Bharti Enterprises Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal to increase his stake in British telecom giant BT, according to a Financial Times report. The opposition is reportedly linked to concerns over maintaining sovereign control of critical national infrastructure. Bharti currently owns a 24.95 per cent stake in BT. Recent reports suggested the company was considering raising its holding to just below the level that would trigger a mandatory takeover offer. However, Bharti earlier clarified it was satisfied with its current stake and had no immediate plans to increase ownership further.

Akasa Air flight makes emergency landing in Lucknow

New Delhi

An Akasa Air flight from Bengaluru to Bhubaneswar made an emergency landing at Lucknow International Airport after being diverted due to adverse weather conditions at its destination. Flight QP 1503, operated by a Boeing 737 MAX 8, was carrying 194 passengers and crew members. Reports said the aircraft issued a "PAN PAN" alert after fuel levels became low during diversion, prompting Air Traffic Control to activate emergency procedures. Crash fire tenders were deployed as a precaution. The aircraft landed safely, and no assistance was required. Akasa Air later confirmed the flight safely reached Bhubaneswar shortly after midnight.

India, Korea deepen CEPA talks on digital trade

India, South Korea form CEPA sub-groups focusing on digital trade, supply chains, investment cooperation and balanced bilateral economic growth.

NEW DELHI

India and South Korea have agreed to establish dedicated sub-groups to intensify discussions on digital trade, supply chain cooperation and strategic industrial collaboration as part of ongoing negotiations to upgrade the India-Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IK CEPA).

The decision was announced following the latest round of CEPA upgrade talks held in New Delhi on Thursday. According to an official statement from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the discussions were conducted in a "constructive and cooperative spirit", reflecting the growing bilateral partnership between the two countries.

The negotiations follow the Joint Declaration signed on April 20 by Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and South Korean Trade Minister Yeo Han-koo during the state visit of the President of the Republic of Korea to India.

Both countries reviewed the progress achieved so far in the CEPA upgrade process and reaffirmed their commitment to concluding the negotiations within a time-bound framework.

The Ministry stated that the discussions aligned with the "Futuristic Partnership" vision shared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Lee Jae-myung, aimed at strengthening long-term economic and strategic cooperation between the two nations.

During the latest round of talks, negotiators discussed a wide range of areas including trade in goods, trade in services, investment, rules of origin and origin procedures, as well as sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

The two sides also acknowledged concerns regarding the widening bilateral trade deficit since the original IK CEPA came into effect in 2010. Officials agreed to address the issue as part of the broader review and modernization of the agreement.

The proposed sub-groups are expected to focus specifically on emerging areas such as digital commerce, resilient supply chains and industrial cooperation in strategic sectors. These discussions are aimed at ensuring that the upgraded agreement reflects current global trade realities and supports future economic growth.

India and South Korea expressed confidence that the upgraded CEPA would help create a more balanced and mutually beneficial trade relationship while expanding opportunities for businesses and investors in both countries.

Engineering exports grow despite West Asia disruptions

NEW DELHI

India's engineering exports rise 8.78% to $10.35 billion, driven by metals, machinery growth despite West Asia conflict and weak ASEAN demand overall.

India's engineering goods exports continued their upward trajectory in April 2026, rising nearly 9 per cent year-on-year despite disruptions caused by ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia, according to industry data released by EEPC India.

Exports of engineering goods stood at $10.35 billion in April 2026, compared with $9.52 billion in the same month last year, marking a growth of 8.78 per cent. The performance highlights resilience in India's export sector amid global uncertainty and supply chain challenges.

Growth was driven by strong performance across multiple product categories. Aluminium and related products recorded a sharp 38 per cent rise, while copper and related products surged an impressive 80 per cent. Electric machinery and equipment exports increased 9.5 per cent, and two- and three-wheeler shipments grew 36 per cent. Auto components also saw a steady rise of 7.2 per cent.

Out of 34 engineering product categories, 28 registered positive year-on-year growth, indicating broad-based improvement across the sector.

EEPC India Chairman Pankaj Chadha noted that export momentum remained strong across most markets despite geopolitical headwinds, particularly in West Asia and North Africa (WANA), where conflict-related disruptions impacted trade flows.

He said shipments to the WANA region remained under pressure, although exports to Oman showed improvement, supported in part by the India-Oman trade agreement.

However, exports to countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Singapore declined during the month.

Chadha also pointed to strong growth in exports to China, which surged 81.7 per cent year-on-year to $301.08 million. Meanwhile, shipments to North America and the European Union rose 7.1 per cent and 13 per cent respectively.

He emphasised the need to address non-tariff barriers and market access challenges to fully leverage India's growing network of free trade agreements. He also warned against rising global protectionism, urging coordinated efforts between government, industry and diplomatic missions to support exporters.

Engineering goods accounted for 23.8 per cent of India's total merchandise exports in April 2026, slightly lower than the previous year, but still reflecting their strong contribution to the country's trade performance.

Overall, the data suggests that India's engineering export sector remains resilient and diversified, even as regional conflicts and global trade uncertainties continue to pose challenges.

India tops global consumer confidence index at 66.6, driven by strong finances and investment optimism despite employment concerns rising.

INDIA LEADS GLOBAL CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX

NEW DELHI

India has retained its position as the world's most confident consumer market in May 2026, according to the latest LSEG-Ipsos Primary Consumer Sentiment Index (PCSI). The country recorded a score of 66.6, marking a marginal increase of 0.4 percentage points from the previous month.

The report noted that India was the only country among surveyed markets to cross the 60-point threshold, reinforcing its lead in global consumer sentiment despite ongoing geopolitical and economic uncertainties.

Malaysia and Indonesia followed India with identical scores of 56.7, while Sweden registered 55.4. Brazil and Mexico recorded moderate sentiment levels at 52.3 and 51 respectively. At the lower end of the index, France stood at 39.3, Japan at 37.8, and Turkey remained the weakest performer at 35.6.

India's overall improvement was driven mainly by stronger confidence in personal finances and investment outlook. The sub-index for personal financial conditions rose by 1.2 percentage points, while the investment sentiment index increased by 1.7 points during the month.

However, not all indicators moved positively. The employment sub-index fell by 1.5 percentage points, reflecting growing concerns over job security amid global uncertainty and technology-driven disruption. The economic expectations index remained largely stable, edging up only slightly by 0.1 percentage points.

Experts noted that consumer sentiment remained resilient despite external pressures such as rising crude oil prices, fluctuations in the rupee and geopolitical tensions linked to the Strait of Hormuz and broader West Asia developments.

Suresh Ramalingam, CEO of Ipsos India, said households continued to show optimism about personal finances and investment prospects even as employment concerns increased due to artificial intelligence-led disruption and corporate cost-cutting trends.

He added that recent fuel price increases could add inflationary pressure on household budgets in the coming months, though government measures have helped cushion some of the impact.The monthly PCSI survey tracks sentiment across four key areas—personal finances, economic expectations, employment and investment outlook—and is widely used as an indicator of consumer demand and broader economic momentum.

Australia sues 3M over PFAS contamination case

SYDNEY

Australia has filed a landmark lawsuit against U.S. chemical company 3M, seeking over $1.4 billion in damages for widespread contamination linked to PFAS "forever chemicals." The government alleges that 3M supplied PFAS-based firefighting foam used at 28 Defence sites and failed to fully disclose environmental risks. Authorities say cleanup costs have already exceeded A$1 billion, including soil remediation and water treatment.

AI skill demand jumps across India's CDMO sector

NEW DELHI

India's contract development and manufacturing organization (CDMO) sector is witnessing a major transformation in hiring patterns, with demand for artificial intelligence (AI)-related skills rising sharply over the past two years, according to a new report released on Thursday.

The report by HR solutions provider CIEL HR revealed that AI-linked skill demand in the sector surged by 178% between 2023 and 2025. During the same period, overall hiring in the sector increased by 52 per cent, highlighting rapid expansion and growing technological integration across pharmaceutical manufacturing and research operations.

According to the findings, AI-related demand accounted for 17.2 per cent of hiring requirements in 2025, compared to just 6.2 per cent two years ago. Technology and digital functions recorded the highest AI demand at nearly 38 per cent.

The report noted that AI adoption is no longer limited to conventional technology roles. Companies are increasingly seeking AI-enabled talent in critical functions such as research and development (R&D), quality control, analytics and manufacturing operations.

Hiring trends indicate that the sector is moving away from labor- intensive expansion toward capability-driven growth focused on automation, efficiency and precision.

Google engineer accused of insider trading scheme

NEW DELHI

US authorities have charged a Google software engineer with allegedly earning $1.2 million through insider trading using confidential company information on a prediction market platform. The case was announced by the US Department of Justice (DOJ).

The accused, Michele Spagnuolo, a 36-year-old Italian citizen living in Switzerland, faces charges of commodities fraud, wire fraud and money laundering linked to trades placed on Poly market. Prosecutors claim he operated under the online alias "Alpha Raccoon".

According to investigators, Spagnuolo used his role at Google to gain access to confidential internal data and software tools. Authorities allege that he then used non-public company information to place profitable bets on prediction markets tied to Google-related events.

The DOJ stated that between October 15 and December 4, 2025, the account allegedly placed trades worth around $2.75 million based on confidential information. Once the information became public and the markets settled, the trades reportedly generated nearly $1.2 million in profits.

Prosecutors said Spagnuolo had acknowledged Google's confidentiality and ethics policies as part of his employment responsibilities. They argue that he knowingly misused privileged access for personal financial gain.

US Attorney Jay Clayton said the charges demonstrate that insider trading laws apply to emerging digital prediction markets as well as traditional financial markets. He stressed that corporate insiders cannot exploit confidential business information for personal profit.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also accused Spagnuolo of abusing his privileged access to confidential company data. He appeared before a US magistrate judge in Manhattan after the complaint was unsealed.

If convicted, Spagnuolo could face up to 10 years in prison for commodities fraud and as much as 20 years each for wire fraud and money laundering. Final sentencing, however, would be determined by the court.

India corporate bond market hits $645 billion

NEW DELHI

India's corporate bond market has expanded significantly, reaching $645 billion in 2025, according to a new report by Care Edge Ratings. The steady growth reflects deeper corporate borrowing needs, even as the market continues to lag global peers in size and diversity.

The report noted that the market has nearly doubled from $360 billion in 2016 to its current level. However, despite this expansion, India's corporate debt-to-GDP ratio has remained largely unchanged at around 16–17 per cent, indicating limited structural deepening.

Care Edge highlighted that India still trails countries such as China, Malaysia and South Korea in corporate bond market penetration, underscoring substantial room for future growth. The report said strengthening debt capital markets will be essential to support India's long-term economic ambitions.

India's corporate bond issuances have grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 11.4 per cent, taking outstanding corporate bonds to nearly ₹59 lakh crore. However, market participation remains concentrated, with the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector accounting for over 60 per cent of issuances.

The report also pointed out that high-rated securities dominate the market, with AAA and AA-rated instruments making up more than 85 per cent of total outstanding bonds. This limits access for lower-rated companies and restricts broader market development.

Mehul Pandya, Managing Director and Group CEO of Care Edge, said India's ambition of becoming a $30 trillion economy by 2047 would require a more developed debt ecosystem capable of financing long-term growth.

He suggested widening investor participation by easing investment norms for retirement funds and insurance companies, improving foreign investor access, and enhancing awareness among domestic investors.

The report also recommended steps to improve secondary market liquidity, including the development of bond market-making mechanisms, derivatives and exchange-traded bond funds. It further called for rationalizing taxation and encouraging broader participation to deepen the market.

Overall, the findings indicate that while India's corporate bond market is growing steadily, structural reforms will be crucial to unlock its full potential and support large-scale economic expansion.

SUGAR SECTOR SUSTAINABILITY

Govt pushes circular economy in sugar sector reform

NEW DELHI

The government is promoting a circular economy model to strengthen India's cooperative sugar sector, aiming to improve profitability, reduce waste and increase value addition through by-product utilization, according to a recent report.

The initiative focuses on making sugar mills more sustainable by integrating circular economy principles, where agricultural and industrial waste is converted into useful resources such as ethanol, bio-energy and other co-products. The approach is expected to reduce dependency on traditional sugar production and enhance revenue streams for cooperative sugar mills.

Ministry of Cooperation | सहकारिता मंत्रालय
Government of India | भारत सरकार

Officials and industry experts note that India's sugar sector has long faced structural challenges, including price volatility, surplus production cycles and rising input costs. By adopting circular economy practices, the sector aims to stabilize income for farmers and improve financial health of cooperative mills.

A key element of the policy is the increased emphasis on ethanol production from sugarcane by-products, which aligns with India's broader energy transition goals. The government has been encouraging mills to diversify into ethanol blending, co-generation of power and other renewable energy outputs.

The cooperative sugar sector plays a crucial role in rural economies, particularly in states such as Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, where millions of farmers depend on sugarcane cultivation. Strengthening these cooperatives through modernization and value-added production is seen as essential for rural development.

The report highlights that the circular economy model also supports environmental sustainability by reducing waste and promoting efficient resource utilization. Molasses, bagasse and press mud—traditionally treated as waste—are increasingly being used in energy generation, fertilizers and industrial applications.

Experts believe that scaling up this model will require strong policy support, improved infrastructure and better access to finance for cooperative mills. Investment in technology and logistics is also considered critical for achieving long-term sustainability.

DECREASING LIFE EXPECTANCY:
Why Are We Living Shorter Lives?

For most of recorded human history, the story of medicine and public health was one of relentless progress; a steady, hopeful march toward longer, healthier lives. Life expectancy in the early 20th century hovered around 40 to 50 years in much of the world. By the late 1900s, it had climbed dramatically, surpassing 75 in many developed nations. Scientists, physicians, and policymakers celebrated each milestone as proof that humanity was winning the war against disease and early death. But something has shifted. In the 21st century, that upward arc has begun to flatten and in some nations, it has reversed entirely. The question is no longer just how to extend life, but how to understand why, in some of the wealthiest countries on earth, people are dying younger.

The Opioid Crisis: DEATHS OF DESPAIR

No single factor has done more to erode life expectancy in the United States than the opioid epidemic. Beginning in the late 1990s, pharmaceutical companies aggressively marketed opioid painkillers, assuring physicians and patients that addiction risk was low. The consequences were catastrophic. Overdose deaths from opioids including prescription painkillers, heroin, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl have claimed over 500,000 American lives since 1999. But the opioid crisis is not merely a drug problem. Sociologists Anne Case and Angus Deaton coined the phrase "deaths of despair" to describe a broader pattern of mortality among middle-aged white Americans without college degrees a group experiencing rising rates of suicide, alcohol-related liver disease, and drug overdose simultaneously. These are deaths driven not by infection or biology alone, but by the erosion of economic security, social belonging, and a sense of purpose.

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

The statistics are sobering. In the United States, life expectancy peaked at 78.8 years in 2014 and began declining well before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. The pandemic accelerated that fall dramatically by 2021, average life expectancy in the U.S. had dropped to 76.1 years, a level not seen since 1996. While some of that loss has been partially recovered, the United States still lags behind dozens of other wealthy nations. A child born in Japan, Australia, or Switzerland today can expect to live nearly five years longer than one born in America.

The United Kingdom has seen similar trends. British life expectancy improvements, which had been consistent for over a century, stalled after 2010 and in some demographic groups have reversed. In parts of Eastern Europe, particularly in countries like Hungary, Lithuania, and Bulgaria, life expectancy for men remains troublingly low sometimes below 70 years. Even in Nordic countries, known globally for their healthcare systems and quality of life, researchers have flagged warning signs of plateauing gains.

What makes these trends especially alarming is their selectivity. Life expectancy is not declining equally for everyone.

The burden falls hardest on the poor, on racial minorities, on rural populations, and on those with limited education.

In the United States, a 40-year-old man in the bottom income quartile can expect to live roughly 15 fewer years than a man of the same age in the top quartile. The gap between the richest and the poorest is not a health gap it is a survival gap.

Chronic Disease: The Silent Epidemic

While overdoses grab headlines, chronic non-communicable diseases are the quiet machinery grinding down life expectancy across the globe. Heart disease, type 2 diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and certain cancers are the leading killers in virtually every high-income country and they are all deeply tied to modern lifestyle and environment.

The obesity epidemic is particularly stark. In 1975, roughly 3 to 4 percent of adults globally were obese. Today that figure exceeds 13 percent, with rates in some countries the United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom significantly higher. Obesity is not a cosmetic issue; it is a metabolic crisis that dramatically elevates the risk of heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, and at least 13 different cancers. Carrying excess weight shaves years off life expectancy in a measurable, documented way.

The food environment has changed faster than our biology can adapt. Ultra-processed foods engineered to override satiety signals and maximize consumption now make up a majority of calories in many Western diets. These products are cheap, ubiquitous, and aggressively marketed. They are also, according to a growing body of research, associated with increased risk of depression, cognitive decline, inflammatory disease, and early death. We have built a world where eating healthily requires both financial resources and constant, exhausting vigilance.

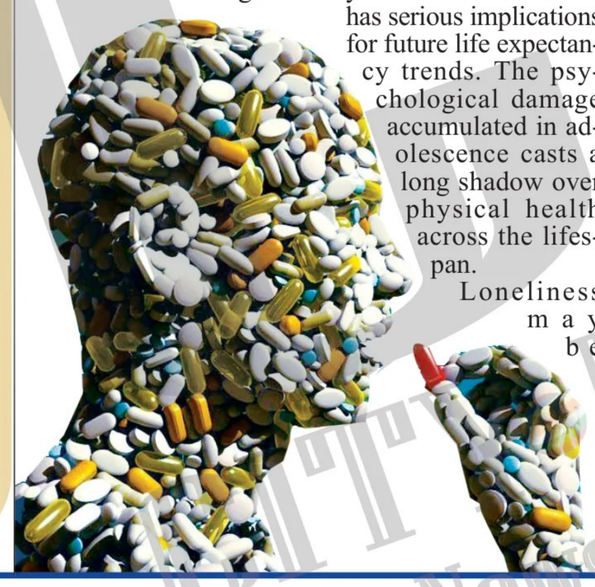
Physical inactivity compounds the problem. Desk-bound work, car-dependent cities, screens that capture hours of our daily attention the modern lifestyle has made movement increasingly optional.

Adults today are on average far less physically active than their grandparents were, not from laziness but from structural shifts in how work and leisure are organized.

MENTAL HEALTH AND THE LONELINESS CRISIS

Mental illness kills. It does so directly, through suicide which claims roughly 700,000 lives globally each year and indirectly, by worsening physical health outcomes, discouraging help-seeking, and shortening the lives of those who suffer in silence.

Depression and anxiety have risen dramatically in recent decades, particularly among younger generations. Rates of adolescent depression and self-harm have surged in the United States and United Kingdom since approximately 2012 a timing that researchers have linked, controversially but compellingly, to the rise of smartphone use and social media. Whether or not social media is the primary cause, the fact of rising youth mental illness has serious implications for future life expectancy trends. The psychological damage accumulated in adolescence casts a long shadow over physical health across the lifespan.



Loneliness may be even more dangerous than depression in terms of sheer mortality risk. Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared loneliness a public health epidemic in 2023, citing evidence that social isolation increases the risk of premature death by as much as 26 percent — an effect comparable to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Modern societies have become structurally lonely: families dispersed across geographies, neighbors who never meet, work relationships that are transactional rather than connective, religious and civic institutions that have declined in participation. Humans are profoundly social animals, and the erosion of genuine community is killing people.

Healthcare Systems Under Strain

Even the best medicine cannot save a population from itself but healthcare systems still matter enormously, and many are struggling. The United States, despite spending more per capita on healthcare than any other nation on earth, delivers mediocre outcomes by international comparison. Americans die younger and experience more preventable illness than citizens of countries that spend far less. The reasons are complex: fragmented insurance systems that leave millions uninsured or underinsured, a culture of reactive treatment rather than preventive care, pharmaceutical pricing structures that price life-saving drugs out of reach, and social determinants of health that no doctor can prescribe away.

In lower and middle-income countries, under-resourced healthcare systems face a different but equally pressing challenge: the double burden of disease. Infectious diseases that wealthier nations have largely controlled tuberculosis, malaria, HIV; continue to exact enormous tolls while chronic disease rates simultaneously rise. Healthcare systems designed to fight one enemy find themselves overwhelmed by two.

Climate Change: An Emerging Mortality Driver

The relationship between climate change and life expectancy is just beginning to be fully understood and the early findings are grim. Extreme heat events, which are becoming more frequent and severe, kill directly through heatstroke and cardiovascular collapse, and kill indirectly by worsening air quality, spreading disease vectors, contaminating water supplies, and undermining food security.Researchers estimate that by mid-century, heat-related mortality could claim hundreds of thousands of additional lives annually in heat-vulnerable regions. Air pollution driven in part by fossil fuel combustion already kills approximately 7 million people per year globally. Wildfire smoke, which affects increasingly large populations, carries fine particulate matter associated with lung disease, heart disease, and premature birth. The environmental conditions that sustain human health are being degraded at a pace that public health systems are not yet equipped to handle.

Can the Trend Be Reversed?

The decline in life expectancy is not inevitable. It is the product of specific, identifiable forces social, economic, environmental, and political and forces that human beings created can be changed. But change requires honesty about the scale and nature of the problem.

Progress will require addressing the structural conditions that drive poor health: poverty, inequality, food deserts, housing insecurity, lack of access to quality education and meaningful work. It will require healthcare systems that prioritize prevention as seriously as they do treatment. It will require serious, sustained attention to the mental health crisis and the epidemic of loneliness. It will require drug policy reform, environmental regulation, and investment in the social infrastructure the parks, libraries, community centers, and civic institutions that bind communities together.

Above all, reversing the decline in life expectancy will require recognizing that health is not merely a biological phenomenon. It is a reflection of the society we have built. A nation that allows its citizens to live in poverty, breathe polluted air, eat food designed to make them sick, and die alone is not simply facing a health crisis. It is facing a crisis of values.

Conclusion

The declining life expectancy in parts of the developed world is one of the most important and underreported stories of our time. It challenges the assumption that progress in human wellbeing is automatic or irreversible. It exposes the fault lines of inequality that run through even the wealthiest societies. And it raises an urgent, uncomfortable question: what kind of world are we building, and who gets to survive it?

The answer will be written not in hospital wards alone, but in the policy choices, social structures, and collective commitments of the years ahead. The science of living longer has never been more advanced. What remains to be seen is whether the will to act on that science is strong enough to overcome the forces pulling in the opposite direction.

Declining Life Expectancy Signals Deepening Global Health, Social, & Environmental Crisis

- Opioid addiction crisis sharply reduced life expectancy across the United States.
- Drug overdoses and suicides increased deaths among struggling middle-aged populations.
- Economic insecurity weakened communities and intensified widespread mental health problems globally.
- Chronic diseases became leading causes of premature deaths in developed nations.
- Obesity rates increased rapidly due to unhealthy processed food consumption worldwide.
- Sedentary lifestyles contributed significantly to diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases globally.
- Ultra-processed foods increased risks of depression, cancer, and early mortality rates.
- Mental health disorders now affect millions, especially vulnerable younger generations worldwide.
- Rising loneliness created severe public health risks comparable to heavy smoking.
- Social isolation weakened emotional wellbeing and increased premature death risks significantly.
- Healthcare systems struggle balancing preventive care with growing chronic disease burdens.
- High healthcare spending failed improving outcomes in several developed countries consistently.
- Developing nations face infectious diseases alongside rapidly increasing chronic illnesses simultaneously.
- Antibiotic resistance threatens reversing decades of medical and healthcare progress worldwide.
- Climate change increased deaths through extreme heat and worsening air pollution.
- Wildfire smoke and polluted air damaged lungs and cardiovascular health globally.
- COVID-19 pandemic disrupted healthcare services and reduced routine disease screenings worldwide
- Long COVID created lasting health complications affecting millions of survivors internationally.
- Poverty, inequality, and poor living conditions continue reducing average life expectancy.
- Reversing declining longevity requires stronger healthcare, communities, and environmental protection policies.

The Pandemic's Long Shadow

COVID-19 has left its mark on life expectancy in ways that extend beyond the death toll of the acute phase. Long COVID a syndrome affecting millions of survivors with persistent fatigue, cognitive impairment, cardiovascular damage, and immune dysregulation represents a new chronic disease burden that societies are only beginning to grapple with. Its long-term effects on mortality and quality of life remain uncertain, but the scale of affected individuals is enormous.

The pandemic also disrupted routine healthcare in ways that will ripple forward for years. Cancer screenings were delayed; chronic disease management was interrupted; mental health deteriorated; childhood vaccination rates dropped. The health consequences of these disruptions are not yet fully measurable, but they will be.

Indian Shuttlers Advance Strongly Into Singapore Open Quarterfinals

Indian badminton players delivered dominant victories and resilient comebacks to secure four quarterfinal berths at Singapore Open

SINGAPORE

India's challenge at the Singapore Open gathered impressive momentum on Thursday as several leading shuttlers produced commanding displays to progress into the quarterfinals across multiple categories. Strong performances from women's singles star PV Sindhu and men's singles contender Lakshya Sen, along with determined victories in doubles events, highlighted an encouraging day for Indian badminton.

Sindhu once again emerged as the standout performer after cruising past Japan's Riko Gunji in straight games. The two-time Olympic medallist dominated the contest from the beginning and sealed a comprehensive 21-9, 21-12 victory in just 37 minutes. Sindhu displayed sharp movement, controlled the rallies efficiently, and never allowed her opponent to settle into the match. Her latest victory followed an equally impressive triumph earlier in the tournament over Indonesian fifth seed Putri Kusuma Wardani.

The Indian star now faces a massive challenge in the quarterfinals against reigning Olympic champion and world number one An Se-young. Sindhu has not yet defeated the Korean shuttler in their previous eight meetings, making the upcoming clash one of the tournament's most anticipated encounters.

In men's singles, Lakshya Sen advanced under unusual circumstances after Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn retired almost immediately after the match began. Only two points were played before the Thai player withdrew, allowing Lakshya to move into the last eight with minimal exertion. The Indian will next face Japan's Koki Watanabe for a place in the semi-finals.

India's top men's doubles combination of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty survived a stern challenge from Chinese Taipei's Lee Jhe-huei and Yang Po-hsuan. The Indian pair claimed the opening game comfortably before losing momentum in the second. However, they regained control in the decider to register a hard-fought 21-15, 11-21, 21-18 victory and extend their unbeaten record against the Taiwanese duo to 7-0.

In mixed doubles, Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila staged a remarkable comeback after losing the opening game heavily against Japan's Maya Taguchi and Yuta Watanabe. The Indian pair recovered brilliantly to win 8-21, 21-17, 21-16 and secure a memorable quarterfinal berth. Meanwhile, HS Prannoy suffered disappointment after losing a tough three-game encounter against Singapore's former world champion Loh Kean Yew.

Indian Officials Earn Prestigious Women's T20 World Cup Roles

LONDON

Three Indian umpires and one referee secured important appointments for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup

Indian cricket officials achieved a significant milestone after Janani N, Vrinda Rathi and Gayathri Venugopalan were named in the umpiring panel for the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup. Veteran official GS Lakshmi was also selected as one of the four match referees for the prestigious tournament, which begins on June 12 in Birmingham.

The tournament will once again feature an entirely female panel of match officials, continuing a notable initiative introduced in previous editions. A total of 14 umpires and four match referees will supervise 33 matches during the 12-team global competition. The upcoming event represents the third consecutive Women's T20 World Cup to be conducted exclusively by women officials, highlighting the growing representation and influence of women in international cricket administration and officiating.

Among the selected umpires, Gayathri Venugopalan will make her ICC Women's T20 World Cup debut alongside Candace La Borde, Kerrin Klaaste and Shathira Jakir Jesy. The International Cricket Council praised the development of female match officials across world cricket and acknowledged the consistently high standards displayed by officials in recent bilateral series and ICC events.

Several experienced officials from previous tournaments have also retained their positions for the 2026 edition. Australia's Claire Polosak is set to officiate in her sixth Women's T20 World Cup and has already stood in 22 matches, the highest by any umpire in the tournament's history. Jacquline Williams and Kim Cotton are also set to achieve the milestone of participating in five editions of the competition, having each officiated in 19 matches previously.

Alongside Lakshmi, experienced referees Shandré Fritz and Michell Pereira return to the panel, while New Zealand's Trudy Anderson joins the officiating group for the upcoming tournament.

ICC Chief Executive Officer Sanjog Gupta stated that the panel reflected the governing body's commitment to broader representation in every aspect of cricket. He added that the selected officials had demonstrated exceptional standards during recent international tournaments and would contribute significantly to what is expected to become one of the largest women's sporting events globally.

The appointments also underline India's growing influence in cricket officiating, with multiple Indian officials earning recognition at the highest international level through consistent performances and professional excellence.

Bhopal Leopards reveal squad ahead of MPL T20 Scindia Cup 2026

MADHYA PRADESH LEAGUE
SCINDIA CUP

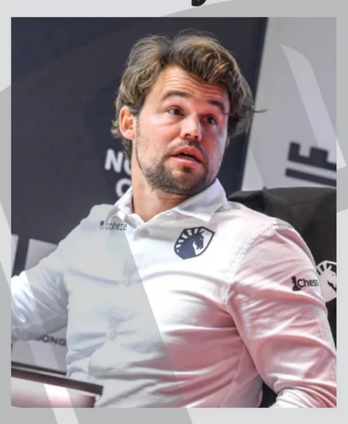
BHOPAL

Defending champions Bhopal Leopards have announced their squad for the Madhya Pradesh League (MPL) T20 Scindia Cup. The side features exciting talents like Aniket Verma and Arshad Khan. Leopards will start the campaign against Indore Pink Panthers on June 4 in the evening match at Holkar Stadium. The new season of the Madhya Pradesh League (MPL) T20 Scindia Cup is all set to begin on June 3, with Gwalior Cheetahs taking on Ujjain Falcons in the opening match of the men's tournament. The match will be played at the Holkar Stadium in Indore.

NORWAY CHESS PARODY

Praggnanandhaa Stuns Magnus Carlsen In Norway Chess Thriller

OSLO



Indian chess sensation Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu produced one of the biggest victories of his career after defeating world number one Magnus Carlsen in classical chess during the third round of the prestigious Norway Chess 2026 tournament.

The thrilling contest witnessed dramatic swings before Praggnanandhaa finally emerged victorious against the five-time world champion. The Indian grandmaster gradually built pressure throughout the game and appeared to hold a clear advantage for long periods. However, the momentum shifted during severe time trouble when Carlsen managed to turn the position in his favour.

Despite recovering brilliantly, the Norwegian star later committed a decisive error under pressure. Realising the position had become impossible to save, Carlsen resigned immediately, handing Praggnanandhaa a memorable triumph in one of the tournament's most significant results so far.

Meanwhile, reigning world champion Gukesh Dommaraju battled tournament leader Alireza Firouzja in another highly competitive encounter. The classical game ended in a hard-fought draw after both players navigated a tense struggle filled with tactical complexities. Firouzja later secured victory in the Armageddon tiebreak game to earn additional points and maintain his impressive lead at the top of the standings.

The third classical game of the round between Vincent Keymer and Wesley So also concluded in a draw following a balanced and cautious battle. Wesley So subsequently won the Armageddon contest to collect the extra points available under the tournament's unique scoring system.

Following three rounds, Firouzja continues to lead the overall standings after another successful outing in the competition.

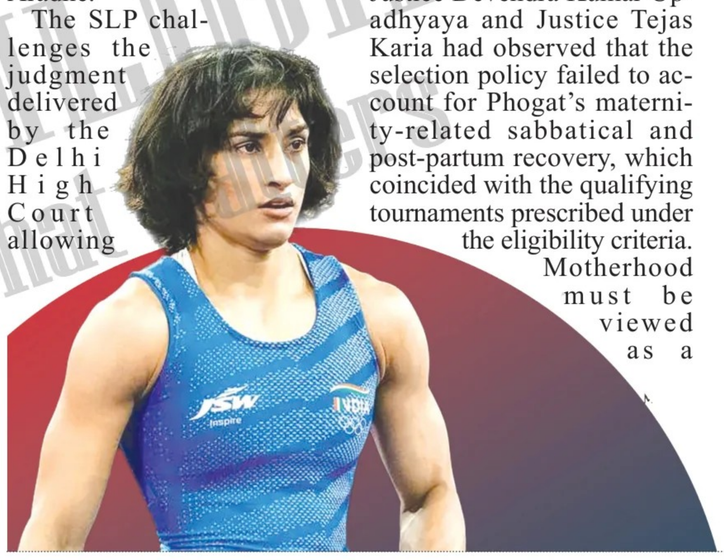
The women's section of Norway Chess also produced another day of closely fought encounters, with all three classical games ending in draws before Armageddon tiebreaks determined the final outcomes.

WFI challenges Delhi HC relief to Vinesh Phogat in Supreme Court

NEW DELHI

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Delhi High Court's order permitting wrestler Vinesh Phogat to participate in the Asian Games 2026 selection trials.

As per details available on the apex court's official website, the Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by the WFI is scheduled to come up for hearing before a bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe.



The SLP challenges the judgment delivered by the Delhi High Court allowing Phogat, a three-time Olympian, to participate in the selection trials for the Asian Games 2026 despite not fulfilling the eligibility criteria under the WFI's policy.

In its order passed last week, the Delhi High Court had held that motherhood cannot be treated as a disability or a ground for exclusion from professional opportunities, and directed the WFI to permit Phogat to compete in the trials scheduled for May 30 and 31.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia had observed that the selection policy failed to account for Phogat's maternity-related sabbatical and post-partum recovery, which coincided with the qualifying tournaments prescribed under the eligibility criteria.

Motherhood must be viewed as a natural and deeply significant aspect of life that deserves accommodation and institutional sensitivity, the Delhi High Court had said, while finding a prima facie case in favour of the wrestler.

It had also directed that the selection trials be video-recorded and conducted under the supervision of independent observers nominated by the Sports Authority of India and the Indian Olympic Association.

It had further clarified that Phogat's participation would remain subject to the outcome of the pending writ petition before the single-judge Bench examining the validity of the WFI's selection policy, circular, and show-cause notice.

The Delhi High Court had also taken strong exception to the language used in the WFI's show-cause notice, terming certain remarks against Phogat as deplorable and indicative of a vindictive approach. Meanwhile, a caveat has been filed on behalf of Phogat through advocate Aman Varma, seeking to ensure that no ex parte order is passed without hearing her side in the matter.

Ukrainian tennis player Yuliia Starodubtseva produced a sensational comeback victory against Elena Rybakina at Roland-Garros

Starodubtseva Stuns Rybakina In Dramatic French Open Upset

PARIS

Ukrainian tennis star Yuliia Starodubtseva delivered the biggest upset of the 2026 French Open after defeating second seed Elena Rybakina in a dramatic three-set women's singles clash on Court Suzanne-Lenglen.

The world number 55 fought back brilliantly to register the biggest victory of her career, overcoming Rybakina 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (10-4) after an intense battle lasting two hours and 28 minutes. Starodubtseva had never defeated a top-10 opponent in six previous attempts, making the victory even more remarkable.

Rybakina began the match strongly and quickly asserted control with aggressive baseline tennis. The Kazakh player secured an early break to move ahead 3-0 before extending her advantage to 5-1. Although Starodubtseva attempted a brief fightback, Rybakina comfortably served out the opening set 6-3 and appeared firmly in command.

However, the momentum shifted completely in the second set as the Ukrainian raised her level significantly. Starodubtseva broke Rybakina twice and stormed to a commanding 5-0 lead before sealing the set 6-1 with fearless shot-making and improved consistency from the baseline.

The deciding set produced high drama as Starodubtseva continued her aggressive approach and secured two early breaks to establish a 3-0 advantage. Just when the match seemed to be slipping away, Rybakina rediscovered her rhythm and fought back impressively, recovering both breaks to level the set at 4-4.

With tension mounting, the contest moved into a decisive tiebreak where Starodubtseva once again demonstrated remarkable composure. The Ukrainian raced to a 6-2 lead and maintained control to close out a memorable 10-4 tiebreak victory.

Speaking after the match, Starodubtseva admitted the result was difficult to describe and expressed pride in defeating one of the world's leading players. She praised Rybakina's quality and acknowledged that she always expected a strong comeback from the former Wimbledon champion.

Statistics highlighted the struggles faced by Rybakina throughout the match. The Kazakh player committed 71 unforced errors while producing only 23 winners. In comparison, Starodubtseva finished with 36 unforced errors and 13 winners, relying heavily on consistency and resilience to secure the stunning upset. Starodubtseva will now face either Hailey Baptiste or Wang Xiyu in the third round at Roland-Garros.

Sports Min Mandaviya to chair review meeting

NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya will undertake a three-day visit to Shillong from May 29 to 31 to participate in a series of programmes focused on youth engagement, sports infrastructure development and implementation of centrally sponsored schemes in Meghalaya. During the visit, Mandaviya will attend the Chintan Shivir organised by the Department of Youth Affairs in Shillong. Meghalaya Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Shakliar Warjri and senior government officials are also expected to participate in the deliberations. A major highlight of the tour will be the inauguration of the Integrated Multipurpose Indoor Sports Complex in Shillong on May 30 alongside Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma.

Excited to test ourselves against world's best, says Pakistan skipper Sana

LAHORE

Pakistan captain Fatima Sana said her team is looking forward to testing itself against the world's best players in the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England, set to take place from June 12 to July 5. Pakistan is in Group 1 of the tournament alongside India, South Africa, Bangladesh, Australia, and the Netherlands.

The Fatima Sana-led side will also take part in two warm-up fixtures against Sri Lanka and Scotland. It is an exciting time for the Pakistan women's cricket team, and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England is another chance for us to showcase our skills on the global stage. The best thing about major tournaments is being able to test yourself against the best players and teams in the world while carrying your country's badge on your chest. World Cups bring pressure, emotion, and memories together.

Those are the moments that every cricketer dreams of being part of, and I'm looking forward to taking to the field with my teammates. It was an honour to lead the team at the 2024 ICC Women's T20 World Cup, and I'm thrilled to once again be able to captain the side at this tournament, Sana wrote in her column for the ICC on Thursday.

Highlighting the balance in the squad, with Pakistan having both talented youngsters and experienced players, Sana said, What is great about this team is the balance between young girls and experienced players. We have match winners in different departments and players who can step up in pressure situations.

We have players like Muneeba Ali, Sadia (Iqbal), and Nashra (Sandhu) who have consistently performed and have valuable experience of playing in major tournaments, she added.

On preparations for the mega event, with Pakistan beating Zimbabwe at home and then set to take part in a tri-series featuring Ireland and West Indies in Dublin, Sana, who hit the fastest half-century in women's T20I cricket in just 15 balls. said, Preparation has been very productive so far. The players understand the responsibility of representing Pakistan at a major tournament, so the focus and intensity in training have been really good.

As well as skills, we have also worked a lot on mindset, which is very important in big games. We have grown a lot in terms of confidence, clarity, and game awareness. The team now understands better how to manage key moments in matches and how to respond under pressure.

Suriya's Vishwanath And Sons

Release Date Officially Announced Worldwide

Sithara Entertainments has officially announced the release date of actor Suriya's upcoming film Vishwanath & Sons along with a set of stylish new posters that quickly grabbed attention on social media. The production house confirmed that the movie will hit theatres worldwide on August 14, 2026, creating excitement among fans across different regions.

The makers shared the update with a special message dedicated to Suriya's loyal Anbaana fans. Soon after the announcement, the posters began trending online as fans widely shared the visuals and praised the film's impressive presentation. The newly released posters show Suriya standing on a rainy street in London. Famous landmarks including Big Ben and the city's traditional red bus can be seen in the background, giving the film an international and cinematic appearance. The dark and stylish visuals have increased curiosity about the movie's story and overall theme.

Another major highlight is that the film's title has been presented in English, Tamil, and Telugu scripts. This has hinted at the makers' plans for a large multilingual release across India and overseas markets.

Directed by Venky Atluri, the film also features Mamitha Baiju, Radikaa, and Raveena Tandon in important roles. Music for the film has been composed by GV Prakash Kumar, whose collaboration with Suriya has already generated strong interest among cinema lovers.

Although the storyline remains secret, the posters suggest that Vishwanath & Sons could be an emotional drama set against an international backdrop.

With Suriya leading the cast and Sithara Entertainments producing the project, expectations are already very high for one of 2026's major pan-Indian releases.

Jean Dujardin's Zorro Series Brings Action, Romance & Comedy Together

MHz Choice has officially released the trailer for its upcoming action series Zorro, presenting a stylish and modern version of the legendary masked hero. The new eight-episode series stars Oscar-winning French actor Jean Dujardin as Don Diego de la Vega and promises a mix of action, romance, humor, and emotional drama. The English-subtitled series is scheduled to premiere in the United States on June 30, 2026.

Set in Los Angeles during the year 1821, the story follows Diego after the death of his father. Diego unexpectedly becomes the city's mayor and soon discovers that Los Angeles is struggling with corruption, financial problems, and political unrest. Realising that political power alone cannot fight injustice, Diego secretly brings back his forgotten identity as Zorro after nearly 20 years.

As the masked vigilante begins helping ordinary citizens, Zorro quickly becomes popular among the people. At the same time, Diego faces growing pressure while trying to balance his responsibilities as mayor with his dangerous secret life.

The series also features Audrey Dana, André Dussollier, Eric Elmosnino, and Salvatore Ficarra in important roles. Ficarra appears as Bernardo, Zorro's trusted companion. Apart from thrilling sword fights and action scenes, the show also focuses strongly on romance and comedy.

Keanu Reeves Requests Leniency For Director Carl Rinsch Before Sentencing

Hollywood actor Keanu Reeves has appealed to a federal judge to show leniency toward filmmaker Carl Rinsch ahead of his sentencing in a major Netflix fraud case connected to the unfinished sci-fi series White Horse. Rinsch, who directed Reeves in the 2013 film 47 Ronin, was convicted after prosecutors accused him of misusing funds provided by Netflix for the series project.

According to reports, a Manhattan federal jury found Rinsch guilty of defrauding Netflix of nearly 11 million US dollars. His sentencing hearing is scheduled to take place on June 29. Ahead of the hearing, Reeves submitted a letter to US District Judge Jed Rakoff requesting mercy for the filmmaker.

In his letter, Reeves described Rinsch as both a friend and a creative artist. The actor clarified that he was not speaking as a therapist or psychologist but as an artistic colleague who had personally worked with the director. Reeves praised Rinsch's creativity and called White Horse a visionary project despite remaining unfinished. The actor also mentioned that Rinsch had brought creative inspiration, warmth, and positivity to people around him over the years. Reeves' support letter was reportedly included in the official sentencing documents submitted by the director's legal team.

Prosecutors alleged that Rinsch used Netflix funds meant for production expenses on personal luxury spending, including expensive purchases and lifestyle costs. However, the filmmaker denied wrongdoing during the trial and argued that Netflix abandoned the project because of rising production expenses and problems caused during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kara Gains Fresh Praise After Netflix Streaming Release Success

Dhanush's crime thriller Kara, directed by Vignesh Raja, is receiving renewed appreciation from audiences following its release on Netflix. The film, which originally arrived in theatres on April 30, started streaming on the OTT platform on May 28 and has now become a major topic of discussion across social media platforms.

During its theatrical run, Kara received mixed reactions from viewers and critics. Many audiences had described the film as emotionally heavy with a slow-moving screenplay. Due to those reactions, several movie lovers skipped watching the film in cinemas.

However, after the OTT release, many viewers who finally watched the movie have now shared positive opinions online. Several fans admitted that they regretted missing the film in theatres because of negative reviews circulating on social media earlier.

Rashmika Mandanna Stuns Fans At Global Anime Awards Ceremony Event

Actress Rashmika Mandanna recently impressed fans with her glamorous appearance at the Global Anime Awards 2026. The actress shared several stylish pictures and behind-the-scenes moments from the international event through her social media accounts, attracting praise from fans across the world.

Rashmika posted a series of photographs on Instagram where she was seen wearing a beautiful black gown featuring colourful shimmering floral embroidery on one side. The elegant floral design became the main attraction of her outfit and added a royal touch to her appearance at the award ceremony.

To complete her stylish look, the actress wore a statement necklace decorated with multicoloured gemstones that perfectly matched her dress. Her elegant fashion choice quickly gained attention online, with many fans appreciating her graceful appearance at the global event.

The actress also shared a special picture while presenting an award alongside Tobagonian actor Winston Duke, who is widely known for his performances in Marvel's Black Panther films and The Fall Guy. Their stage appearance together became one of the highlights from the ceremony.

Apart from official event photographs, Rashmika also posted several behind-the-scenes glimpses from the trip. The pictures showed the actress during interviews, preparing for the event, and enjoying fun moments with her team members.

Rashmika had earlier made history by becoming one of the first Indian actresses to present at the Anime Awards in 2024. She returned once again this year for the 10th edition of the ceremony.

Naga Chaitanya's

Vrushakarma May Release Later Than Expected Date

Telugu actor Naga Chaitanya is currently busy shooting for his upcoming mystical adventure thriller Vrushakarma, directed by Karthik Dandu. While fans were expecting the movie to arrive in theatres soon, the latest reports suggest that the film's release could be delayed until December 2026.

According to reports, the makers are now considering a December release window for the film. However, the production team has not yet officially confirmed the new release date, leaving fans waiting for a formal announcement.

Reports indicate that the post-production work is taking longer than expected because the movie heavily depends on visual effects and fantasy-based sequences. The makers reportedly want additional time to complete the VFX work carefully and deliver a grand cinematic experience to audiences.

Naga Chaitanya had spoken about the film's large scale and technical demands. The actor said that Vrushakarma involves extensive VFX work as the team aims to create a visually rich theatrical experience. He also mentioned that nearly 90 percent of the film had been completed, but the remaining portions and technical work were still pending.

At that time, the actor revealed that the team was planning for an August or October 2026 release. However, the latest reports now hint that the film may arrive a few months later than originally expected.

Earlier this month, the makers completed an important shooting schedule in Rajasthan and shared behind-the-scenes pictures from the sets.

The photos showed the cast and crew filming key scenes and interacting during breaks.

The movie also stars Laapataa Ladies actor Sparsh Shrivastava as the main villain, while Jayaram and Satya play important roles. The music for the film has been composed by Ajaneesh Loknath for the highly anticipated project.

Khushbu's Emotional Speech Touches Hearts At Double Occupancy Event

Veteran actress Khushbu became emotional during the audio launch event of the upcoming film Double Occupancy, a project creatively produced by her daughter Ananthitha Sundar. The touching speech delivered by the actress left many people emotional at the event, including Ananthitha herself, who was seen wiping tears from her eyes on stage.

Directed by Ashwin Kandasamy, Double Occupancy stars Santhosh in the lead role along with Reshma, VTV Ganesh, and Samyuktha in important characters. However, the audio launch became more memorable because of Khushbu's heartfelt words about her daughter and actor Santhosh.

Speaking at the event, Khushbu revealed that Santhosh has been like a son to their family for many years. She shared that both Santhosh and Ananthitha had known each other since childhood and were once always fighting like enemies before eventually becoming best friends.

Khushbu also recalled the time when Ananthitha went to London for higher studies. The actress said the family initially believed her daughter would not stay there for long because she was extremely attached to Santhosh. However, Ananthitha stayed focused on her education while continuing to discuss cinema and stories with him regularly.

The actress further shared that after returning from London, Ananthitha strongly expressed her wish to produce a film with Santhosh as the lead actor. Khushbu emotionally stated that her daughter becomes worried even if Santhosh falls slightly sick and jokingly added that they might have been twins in their previous birth.

Khushbu also said Santhosh had always dreamed of becoming an actor and confidently predicted that he would become a major star in the future.

The emotional moment quickly gained attention online, with many social media users appreciating the close bond shared by the family.

Fans are now eagerly waiting to see how Double Occupancy shapes up on the big screen soon.

ABHIRAMI SAYS TAMIL CINEMA IS FINALLY BREAKING OLD STEREOTYPES

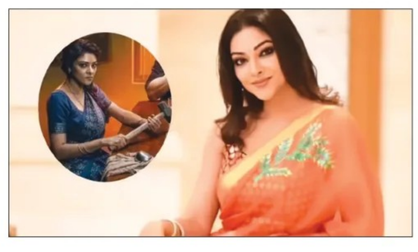
Actress Abhirami has spoken openly about the changing space for women in Tamil cinema while promoting her latest action film Blast, which released in theatres on May 28. Known for her memorable performances in films like Virumaandi and Maharaja, the actress is now surprising audiences with a major physical transformation and intense action performance in the new movie.

Abhirami described her transformation journey as physically difficult but emotionally satisfying. She said the hard work became worthwhile because she was focused on the final result. The actress also shared that looking at her transformation pictures now motivates her personally. Fans have already appreciated her dedication after her new look from the film started trending online.

Speaking about women's roles in cinema, Abhirami said she feels fortunate to continue receiving meaningful characters even after spending decades in the industry. According to her, Tamil cinema has slowly started moving away from old stereotypes connected to actresses after a certain age. She explained that female actors were earlier placed into limited categories, but audiences and filmmakers are now thinking differently.

The actress also revealed that her fitness journey began after she suffered a back injury before the shooting of Blast. She said the injury pushed her to focus more seriously on health and fitness. Abhirami credited her nutritionist, physiotherapist, and trainer for helping her recover both physically and mentally.

Since Blast revolves around a martial arts family, the action scenes required strict preparation and discipline.



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